THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY REMAIN THE SAME: FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHER SHORTAGES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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The more things change, the more they remain the same:

French Immersion Teacher Shortages in British Columbia

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ABSTRACT

Shortages of qualified second language teachers existed for more than eighty years prior to the creation of French immersion in Canada in the mid 1960s, and that legacy has loomed large in efforts to effectively implement and institutionalize the program. Now, after approximately thirty years since the creation of French immersion, there are indications at the national level that the crisis situation of teacher availability is finally easing due to (a) stabilization of enrolment in the program, (b) expanding immersion teacher preparation programs, and (c) less turnover of immersion teachers.

The present study proposed to describe and critically analyze the specific status of French immersion teacher availability in British Columbia, and to ascertain whether there has been a significant change in the situation since the inception of the program. Data were collected through guided telephone interviews with representatives of all 45 school districts in British Columbia that offered French immersion programs during the 1991-92 school year. The questionnaire used for the interviews focused on (a) the statistical reality of French immersion program enrolment and teacher availability and (b) the perceptions within the school districts of the historical, social and political situations surrounding French immersion teacher availability.

The results of the study indicate that in British Columbia, the enrolment rate in French immersion is beginning to stabilize; and, although the situation of French immersion teacher availability has improved, the program still experiences significant problems concerning (a) the recruitment of teachers with specific preparation for immersion teaching, (b) the necessity of recruiting teachers from outside the province, and (c) the retention of teachers. Measures taken by school districts to solve these problems often revealed the lack of a clear definition of the "qualified" immersion teacher, and also demonstrated a need for all stakeholders in the program to clarify the effects of some solutions that may harm rather than help the program in the long term.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A Conceptual Framework for Studying the Change Process in Education

Many educators have deplored the view of educational reform that emphasizes a "deficit" approach whereby problematic situations are perceived as being the result of a lack of something or as a void to be filled (Dewey, 1903; Miles, 1964; Howey & Vaughan, 1983; Tomkins, 1986; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991). Such perceptions take for granted the sanctity of existing practices which are often based on unstudied assumptions (Eisner, 1993). As well, it precludes the serious consideration that certain structural frameworks of the educational system itself may be faulty, and opts instead for external solutions that can be tagged onto the existing structure. Such practices tend to perpetuate problems within the education system, and hinder significant reforms that are long-term and address the global context of society (Wise, 1977; Sarason, 1982).

The Historical Background of French Immersion Teacher Availability

The North American education system has suffered shortages of qualified teachers for second language programs since the late

nineteenth century (Kelly, 1969; Lange, 1979). Against this historical backdrop, the French immersion (FI) program in Canada has worked with a "deficit" of qualified teachers since the 1970s (Obadia, 1989; Collinson, 1989; Burns, 1991). There has been criticism of the lack of long-term administrative planning at the national and provincial levels that could have prevented the situation (Jones, 1984; Burns & Olson, 1989), as well as criticism of post-secondary institutions for failing to provide leadership in alleviating the problem (Coulombe, 1983; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986; Freeman, 1989).

The latest national studies on the availability and preparation of teachers for FI (Canadian Education Association, 1992; Martin, Obadia & Rodriguez, 1993; Obadia & Martin, 1993) indicate that the previous critical shortage of FI teachers has lessened. This appears to be due mainly to increased attention to FI teacher preparation programs, slower FI enrolment rates, and efforts on the part of school districts to attract and retain FI teachers.

There remains, however, a fact that seems to belie the perception of no longer having FI teacher shortages. This fact, stated in all the national studies, is the continuing and significant shortage of teachers having specific preparation (either pre-service or in-service) for teaching in FI (CEA, 1992; Day, Shapson & Desquins, 1993; Obadia & Martin, 1993). This paradox signals the

existence of unclear assumptions as to what constitutes a qualified FI teacher and what conditions constitute an FI teacher shortage. If the problem appears to be less acute on the surface (i.e. there are more available teachers to fill FI positions), yet underlying problems remain (i.e. a large contingent of these teachers has no specific preparation for FI), then one questions whether a significant change has, in fact, taken place.

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

The recent studies of FI teacher shortages show a distinct national perception of an easing of the problem, yet there has been little study done of the situation in specific provinces. Majhanovich (1990) conducted a survey in the province of Ontario and the results closely parallel the national studies. Inasmuch as the study done by Majhanovich offers a valid profile of Ontario and possibly of other provinces that have similar contexts, it may not correspond to the situation in British Columbia (B. C.). Ontario is the province which has the largest FI enrolment nationally (Canadian Parents for French, 1992), has a substantial francophone population, and is situated close to other large francophone centres. B. C., on the other hand, has an FI enrolment that is approximately one-quarter that of Ontario (CPF, 1992), has a very small francophone population, and is situated the farthest of any province from large francophone centres.

There have been no specific studies in B. C. that provide a detailed profile of the problem of FI teacher shortages in the province. It is known that the province has had FI teacher shortages, that it has had to recruit from outside the province (Education Leader, 1991), and that it has had a large percentage of FI teachers who are not native speakers (Obadia, 1984). As well, a study conducted of elementary FI programs in B. C. in the 1980s (Day & Shapson, 1983) indicated that 60% of the FI teachers surveyed had no specialized preparation during their pre-service training, and over half (54%) had received no inservice preparation since being hired. There remains a lack of studies that provide a descriptive and interpretive view of the province's current situation concerning the availability of FI teachers.

This study focuses on British Columbia FI programs and attempts to clarify two important aspects of FI teacher availability in the province: (1) The statistical reality of FI program enrolment and teacher availability in school districts that offer FI programs; and (2) the perceptions within the school districts of the historical, social and political situations surrounding FI teacher availability. Data from the study will also be compared with the latest national studies on FI teacher shortages in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which these studies accurately reflect the situation in B. C.

Method of Study

Representatives of all 45 B. C. school districts offering FI programs were interviewed by telephone, using a prepared questionnaire (see Appendix). During the interviews, respondents were asked to: (1) provide statistical information regarding FI enrolment, FI personnel and school district policy; and (2) give professional opinions concerning future trends in FI and reasons behind certain phenomena affecting teacher availability.

From the data collected, trends were mapped from statistical information, and opinions and predictions were categorized for comparison to national studies on FI teacher availability. Further interpretation of the data was done with emphasis on the socio-historical context of teacher availability for second language programs over the last century.

Delimitations of the Study

In the large majority of cases, each school district was represented by one respondent only. A few districts had two or three respondents when a full set of data could not be obtained from only one person.

To the extent possible, the respondent contacted in each district was the French coordinator or consultant, so as to obtain predictions and opinions from a person closely involved in their

district FI programs and FI programs in general. When this was not possible, another representative of district FI programs was sought. This person usually held one of the following administrative positions: superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of instruction, FI school principal.

Limitations of the Study

Inasmuch as some interview questions involved opinions, estimations and predictions rather than hard statistical data, it cannot be assumed that the particular respondent's answers represented a consensus of her or his school district's administration, teachers and clientele. In order to address this consideration, respondents were sought who were the most likely to have a thorough understanding of the program and who would have easy access to statistical information. Based on these two criteria, it was felt that such people would be able to give informed opinions that would provide valuable insight into the program.

Structure of the Study

This study is divided into eight chapters:

Chapter One describes a conceptual framework, historical background and rationale for the study undertaken. The problem is stated, along with the delimitations and limitations of the study, and the research methods are described.

Chapter Two offers an interpretive review of literature concerning (a) the processes of change in education and (b) past and present second language teacher shortages, with specific emphasis on FI programs.

Chapter Three contains descriptions of the sample, of the measures used, and of the procedures used to carry out a survey of British Columbia school districts offering FI programs.

Chapters Four through Seven present the results and discussion of the data gathered. Analysis of the data has been divided into the following four parts, each of which is treated in a separate chapter:

- FI Program Profiles: Present and Future,
- FI Teachers: Availability, Numbers and Qualifications,
- Hiring Practices for FI Programs and Retention of FI Teachers,
- General Comments Made by School Districts.

Chapter Eight presents conclusions drawn from analysis of the data and makes suggestions for further study and consideration concerning FI teacher availability.

Definition of Terms Used in the Study

French immersion refers to an optional program offered by the majority of English speaking (anglophone) school districts across Canada and, specifically, in 45 school districts in B. C. Within such a program, the non-French speaking student has the opportunity to become functionally bilingual by being immersed in the French language through the study of all or many of the regular school subjects using French as the language of instruction. Although the actual percentage of teaching in the French language within the immersion program can vary from 20 to 100 percent of class time, the large majority of immersion students attend programs that offer from 50 to 100 percent instruction in French. The program is organized at the district level and entry points vary.

Early immersion refers to the French immersion program model most widely adopted in Canada. In this model, students enter the program at the Kindergarten or Grade One level.

Middle immersion refers to the French immersion program model where students enter at the Grade Four or Grade Five level.

Late immersion refers to the French immersion program model where students enter at the Grade Six, Grade Seven, or sometimes Grade 8 level.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Teacher shortages in French immersion (FI) have existed in varying degrees throughout the approximately 30 years that the program has been in existence in Canada. Recent research reports on a national level (CEA, 1992; Obadia & Martin, 1993) and in Ontario (Majhanovich, 1990) indicate, however, that the problem is less acute than before, and that future shortages may be less than originally predicted. It is of note that in each of these reports, researchers qualify their findings by stating that there is still a serious lack of teachers specifically prepared for teaching in FI programs and that a significant number of practising FI teachers are, in fact, without special preparation. This is corroborated by a recent national survey of professional development needs of practising FI teachers (Day et al., 1993) that found that approximately two-fifths of these teachers had received no specialized preparation for immersion either during or after their pre-service education. This conditional response to the question of FI teacher shortage indicates the existence of underlying problems that reach much further than the lack of a certain number of teachers.

This chapter provides an overview of research and theoretical writings concerning the various aspects of teacher shortages in second language (SL) programs, with particular emphasis on FI programs. An attempt is made to identify and clarify issues that go beyond the simple cause-and-effect connections, and to explore historical and socio-political patterns of innovation that have impacted on teacher availability in FI programs.

The first section will treat literature on innovation and change in education for the purposes of articulating a general framework within which to discuss reforms related to SL and particularly to FI teacher shortages. The second section will present a historical and critical view of the pattern and impact of reforms related to SL teacher availability prior to the 1960s when FI programs were established. Against the philosophical and theoretical backdrop of the first two sections, the third section will present a discussion of FI teacher shortages from the 1960s up to the present.

A Conceptual Framework for Viewing Reforms Related to SL Teacher Shortages

Many educators have expressed the need for an approach to reform that goes beyond the level of responding to pressing, narrowly defined needs. In support of a wider view of educational reform, Sarason (1982) distinguishes between what he terms

reforms of the first and of the second order. First order reforms are more limited in focus. They offer solutions to the most pressing problems, and the changes initiated are usually concrete in nature. These reforms are based on a rational approach to problem-solving, and educational change is seen as being effected by carrying out an ordered plan. This approach is exemplified by Burroughs (1991) who writes that the state must support foreign language study by directing and mandating, and that those at the local level must willingly join in and follow (pp. 21-22). In such a case, the basic interest is a technical one, seeking to control and manage the environment through rule-following action based on empirically grounded laws (Grundy, 1987; Smyth, 1991). Schools are viewed as empty vessels that can be filled and refilled according to changing public concerns and reform agendas (Corbett, Firestone & Rossman, 1987, p. 57).

In opposition to the narrow focus of first order reforms, Bod (1991) writes that the SL teaching profession cannot hope to solve or reach consensus on problems of teacher education and teacher recruitment without looking at them in the widest political and social context (p. 20). Brumfit and Rossner (1982) state that the general ideological issues to which language teaching must ultimately relate cannot be simply technical. Decisions made at higher levels must not ignore the wide range of practical possibilities at the physical, social and emotional level of the

classroom. Rationally formulated reforms falsely depict a "hyperrational" system which can be altered simply through logical argument when, in fact, the education system continually fails to conform to a rationalist model (Wise, 1977).

The supposedly rational system follows the line of progress and represents, according to Sullivan (1990), the dominant cultural story and vision, and is said to be hegemonic (p. 223). Within such a system, the definition of human resources tends to be impersonal, conventional and formalized (Sarason, 1982), and the system is often characterized by definable hierarchical relationships and regularized interactions among the people working within the system (Clark, 1981). The prospective teacher is viewed primarily as a passive recipient of professional knowledge and plays little part in determining the substance of his or her preparation (Giroux, 1985; Zeichner, 1991).

According to Sarason (1982), second order reforms address a much larger context and are less focused on immediate problems. These reforms relate to the global rather than specific aspects of a problem and serve to extend the parametres of the first order reforms. Educational change is seen as affecting, in a significant way, a vast and complex socio-political arena. Although a certain amount of immediate external pressure will cause concrete changes to occur, the longer-term effects of these changes will not be systematic and orderly. They will be instead a reflection of the

particular pattern of widely varied aspirations existing within the institution (Hopkins, 1985). Within this view of reform "... the real world of organizational life is populated with people and forces that are not susceptible to planning" (Clark, 1981, p. 58).

Sarason (1967) further contends that reforms can be successful in the first order and unsuccessful in the second order, thus precluding any significant change. Smyth (1991) writes that initiating reform as a consequence of rational self-understanding is one thing, but it is insufficient for any kind of lasting change. Those initiating reform are often unclear whether they intend to change existing regularities or whether they are simply creating new ones that will exist side-by-side with the existing ones (Sarason, 1982, p. 137). According to Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991), most changes in education since the turn of the century have been of the first order, aiming to improve the quality of what already existed, while second-order reforms have largely failed (p. 28). Thus, as Sarason (1967) contends, "The more things change, the more they remain the same" (p. 233).

One of the major obstacles to a balanced understanding of the problem of change is the lack of a social-historical perspective which would allow people to realistically judge the present system in relation to what it was in the past (Stenhouse, 1975; Sarason, 1982; Eisner, 1993). When people view themselves as part of a

historical process, they become more highly cognizant of the plethora of forces with which they deal (Schubert, 1986, p. 412). Kelly (1969) claims that the perception of language teaching done with the purity of motive and design of a scientist, unbiased by social and historical considerations, is demonstrably untrue (p. 407). The successful regulation and transformation of experience gives primary importance to forms of teaching and understanding that begin with the social and historical particularities of peoples' lives (Giroux & Freire, 1987, p. xv). Although the eclecticism now seen in SL teaching may be viewed as unscientific, it is nonetheless a rational response to the rich, fast, chaotic and unplanned nature of real life (Woodward, 1991). It is necessary for teachers to locate themselves personally and professionally in history so as to be clear about the forces that have come to determine human existence (Smyth, 1991).

No experience is pristine and unmediated, nor should it be celebrated uncritically (McLaren & da Silva, 1993). The important difference between mere innovation and true reform is the extent to which significant structural changes in the system have occurred (Sarason, 1982; Fullan & Steiglebauer, 1991). The perception of successful educational reforms in second language programs needs to be critically assessed in light of the larger social and historical contexts which surround the reforms and remain long after their implementation.

A Critical View of Reforms Affecting SL Teacher Availability Up Through the 1960s

Viewed from a historical perspective over the last approximately one hundred years, it becomes apparent that not only is the problem of staffing for second language (SL) programs not new, but that the ways of dealing with the problem have tended to concentrate on immediate practical issues, while failing to address solutions that would significantly change the situation in the long term.

Kelly (1969) writes that prior to the latter part of the nineteenth century, foreign languages (except for Greek and Latin) were taught by informal immersion using native speakers. As formal academic study of foreign languages was not considered necessary, the only qualifications demanded of the teacher were that she or he be a native speaker. Learning was seen as the equivalent of how to teach (Strasheim, 1991). Meanwhile, the formal study of Latin and Greek, considered essential for a proper education, was taught by classical scholars.

By the 1890s, classical studies were in decline and the formal academic study of other foreign languages was becoming widespread (Kelly, 1969). The concept of a second language (SL) methodology came to be generally accepted and, for the first time,

serious attempts were made to reconcile theory and instructional practice (Danesi & Mollica, 1988). However, the school population was increasing and there were insufficient time and resources to prepare a qualified teaching corps to teach the increased number of languages now formally taught in the schools (Kelly, 1969). Thus, the problem of teacher shortages for SL programs emerged.

As the school system moved into the twentieth century, SL teacher shortages became part of the general shortages of qualified teachers which were due in part to population growth and movement toward universal access to education (Kelly, 1969; Tomkins, 1986). In the wake of general teacher shortages, the call for specialized preparation for SL teachers went virtually unheeded. The decline of the discipline of the classics and the new demands placed on schools to respond to a larger and increasingly diverse population brought reforms that emphasized the narrowly professional qualities of a teacher. As the education system came under increasing pressure, the scholarly qualities previously considered necessary for a good teacher declined in importance until it was generally considered that anyone could teach anything (Kelly, 1969; Freeman, 1989; Strasheim, 1991).

The substantial number of SL teachers unskilled in the target language found their way eased by a curriculum that favoured the Grammar-Translation Method, which exercised strict control over

student activity and which did not demand that the teacher or the student be able to speak the language. Kelly (1969) viewed this period as one in which professional standards for SL teaching were adversely affected, and where the profession became a refuge for the incompetent. This view is supported by Lanier and Little (1986) who contend that historical evidence suggests that a norm of intellectual dependence on external expertise was established for teaching in the late 19th century, and that the low-level and haphazard nature of the teacher education curriculum was unquestionably functional for the majority of teachers at that time (p. 554). Thus, in responding to the pressing need for SL teachers, another problem had been created.

Use of the Grammar-Translation Method lasted well into the twentieth century. During the first half of the century, other SL approaches were developed such as the Direct Method and the Natural Method, which focused more on oral language skills. These methods had some success but their effective implementation was beyond the capacities of the many SL teachers unskilled in the language (Kelly, 1969; Danesi & Mollica, 1988).

By the end of the 1930s, the education system had failed to initiate reform in SL teaching due to a lack of effective programs and a lack of teachers skilled in the target language. Education administrators and the public finally began to be aware that quality

SL instruction demanded professionally trained SL teachers (Strasheim, 1991). In the 1940s, SL methodology courses began to appear, although the field was still considered to be "extremely barren" in regard to professional improvement for SL teachers (Paquette, 1966). General teacher shortages were still a problem and the full application of SL teacher specialization remained subject to teacher supply and demand (Kelly, 1969; Strasheim, 1991).

Active and general public involvement in education began to emerge following World War II when there was unpredicted post-war economic growth and a renewed demand for more highly educated and skilled workers (Sarason, 1982; Howey & Vaughan, 1983; Tomkins, 1986). The success of the intensive language programs created by the military during the World War II showed the possibility of wider employment opportunities, and pressure was put on schools to teach students to speak the languages they were studying. This demand immediately gave a higher profile to the need for trained SL teachers who were competent in the target language (Freeman, 1966; Kelly, 1969; Massey, 1980). The subsequent demand for more qualified SL teachers served as impetus for the education system to more actively seek to intiate SL teacher preparation programs (Grace, Freeman, Herge, Matthew, & Selvi, 1955).

Although rare before World War II, SL teacher preparation programs were much more common in the 1950s and 1960s (Kelly, 1969). The programs reflected a largely scientific approach to language learning. The growing importance of behaviorist educational psychology and linguistics came to have a direct bearing on SL methodology. Curricula tended to have a narrow, technical focus and promote a single "true method" of SL teaching to the exclusion of others (Kelly, 1969; Strasheim, 1991), and the programs created for these methods reflected a scientific approach using carefully sequenced and specific objectives and materials (Danesi & Mollica, 1988). SL teacher education at that time was clearly based on what Freeman (1989) refers to as the erroneous theory that effective practice would result from simply transmitting knowledge of linguistics, language acquisition and particular SL methodologies to teachers.

By the end of the 1960s, SL programs were falling into disrepute and SL teacher shortages were still a serious problem (Lange, 1979). Virtually nothing had significantly changed over the approximately eighty years since the 1890s due to the failure of the education system to constructively mediate the conflicting demands of stability and change (Tomkins, 1986). Although the system had continually succeeded in finding teachers to fill positions in SL programs, a workable definition of SL pedagogy still

remained elusive, as shown in the general failure of the many methods and programs developed, and in the failure of teacher preparation institutions to respond to the need for skilled SL teachers. The technical aspects of supply and demand tended to define the qualified SL teacher, and the chronic shortages of these teachers had allowed little time and energy for serious consideration of the long-term effects of reforms being implemented (Lange, 1979).

A Critical View of FI Teacher Shortages Since the Inception of the Program

FI programs in Canada have existed for a relatively short period of time (approximately 30 years) and teacher shortages within the program have been endemic virtually from the beginning (Canadian Education Association, 1983; Collinson, 1989; Obadia, 1989; Burns, 1991). Attitudes toward and solutions to this problem display many similarities to those existing almost eighty years previous to the creation of the program.

Two significant historical trends previously discussed served as impetus for the creation of FI: (1) There was general dissatisfaction with existing SL programs; and (2) education had become a much more public concern whereby parents and institutions outside the schools were actively promoting school reform. Subsequent reforms related to these two general trends

and specifically related to FI teacher availability reveal a continuing pattern of stop-gap measures and haphazard innovations that have served, in some cases, to alleviate immediate stress and, in other cases, to perpetuate and exacerbate the situation.

Much of the literature on the history of North American education after 1957 cites the launching of Sputnik by the Russians as a major turning point in educational reform (Chase, 1966; Griffin, 1983; Fullan & Steiglebauer, 1991) Following this highly publicized event, the general public began to question the ability of the democratic world to maintain its economic and political status in the face of rapid changes in scientific expertise and quantum leaps in the amount of new information generated each year in most academic disciplines. Significant reform in education was seen as the only way to ensure the preparation of children for the onslaught of information and constant change that would define their lives and the life of the nation.

In Canada, important social policies were precipitated by the long-standing crisis concerning the French language. The federal government elected to utilize the '"transfer grant process" to foster bilingualism at a time of heightened concern that francophones were becoming increasingly assimilated, fragmented and alienated (Olson & Burns, 1981). Educational reform became increasingly

politicized and began to gather momentum previously unheard of, and this set the stage for next more than thirty years of concentrated effort to initiate reform of the school system (Goodlad, von Stoephasuis & Klein, 1966; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991).

The first FI programs began in the mid 1960s, during the post-Sputnik period when people and institutions traditionally uninvolved or benignly involved in education began to actively promote changes in the system (Sarason, 1982; Tomkins, 1986). Impetus for reform came primarily from outside the school system itself, from scholars, scientists and philanthorpic organizations (Goodlad, 1966; Neagley & Evans, 1967), and in the case of FI programs, from parent groups (Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Obadia, 1981). The education system was seen as having failed miserably to prepare students for the demands of an increasingly complex world, not only because of lack of quality academic content, but also because of poor teaching that eventually discouraged students from pursuing higher education (Goodlad et al., 1966). It was believed that errors could be corrected and that the future could be shaped according to a rational plan involving information systems, social forecasting, administrative models and cost-effective methods (Tomkins, 1986).

Such an attitude played an important role in the experiment which created in Quebec the first public school FI program. A

group of upper middle-class anglophone parents in Quebec, astute in their reading of the current social and political trends both in their home province and nationally, sought to ensure that their children's education provided fluency in French (Clift, 1984). Their demand prompted the creation of the an FI program in St. Lambert, Quebec in 1965. The instrumental goals of the program were carefully researched from the outset and the final conclusion was that the program did in fact produce bilingual students (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Based on the research results from this innovative French as a second language program offered in a large majority francophone province, and fueled by federal initiatives promoting bilingualism, a powerful movement was launched across the country to establish FI programs.

Stenhouse (1975) states that the 60s and 70s were characterized by the initiation of a great number of reform projects whose success was to be eventually gauged by the number and range of schools adopting the resultant new programs. Indeed, during this period, proponents of the FI program in Canada focused their attention primarily on ensuring its establishment in school districts across the country (Tardif, 1985). The success of their work was evident in the very fast growth in program enrolment nationally. In 1970-71 there were virtually no FI programs outside of Quebec. Five years later in 1976-77, there were nearly 20,000 FI students in eight different provinces (Statistics Canada, 1976-

77). Four years later in 1980-81, that number had more than tripled to almost 65,000 (Statistics Canada, 1980-81). By 1991-92 the enrolment had more than quadrupled to 280,000 covering all provinces and territories (Canadian Parents for French, 1992).

Lange (1979) claims that the decade of the 1970s began with a legacy of chronic teacher shortages for SL programs which had thus far kept the profession from examining its future and carefully assessing its growth. As in the example of FI, a strong commitment to a particular change created barriers to setting up an effective process of change (Wise, 1977; Fullan & Steiglebauer, 1991; Burns, 1991). To the extent that the numbers of students enroling in FI programs was an unexpected success, the insufficient numbers of qualified FI teachers was a virtual disaster for school districts attempting to effectively plan for and administrate the program. There was an absence of long-term planning to address significant questions concerning the supply of FI teachers and criteria for qualifying FI teachers (Olson & Burns, 1983; Obadia, 1983; Tardif, 1985; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986; Burns, 1987). Although in the francophone province of Quebec, there has never been a problem of FI teacher shortage (Direction des politiques et programmes de relations interculturelles, 1992), staffing of programs outside Quebec has been problematic from the outset. Not surprisingly, the problems have been most acute in provinces that have no substantial francophone population and that are

situated farthest from francophone centres, making it necessary for administrators to recruit heavily from outside their respective provinces (Annandale, 1985; Netten, 1992).

By the early 1980s, with the program attaining 19% annual growth, and with a substantial decrease (32%) in the number of teacher candidates being prepared to teach in FI (Wilton, Obadia, Roy, Saunders & Tafler, 1984; Obadia, 1989), national attention was turned to the serious problem of FI teacher shortages (Tardif, 1985). There was a distinct shift from the mainly quantitative aspect of the problem to the qualitative. This coincided with movements that were happening generally in education after what Hopkins and Reid (1985) term as the "heady and sanguine" days of the 1960s and 1970s. The ephemeral economic and social resurgence of that era foundered and there was a general return by Western countries to a conservative political and social ethic. There were renewed calls for national and local governments to take a more active role in coordinating curricula, and there was considerable interest in attempting to professionalize teacher education by basing it on a rigorous scientific model (Hoyle & Megarry, 1980; Bone, 1980; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991).

Educators were again faced with the challenge of creating a workable definition of a second language teacher and a specific definition of an FI teacher (Obadia, 1984; Burns & Olson, 1989; Met,

1989) so that suitable criteria for hiring could be established, and faculties of education could begin to prepare qualified candidates. There had already been general acceptance for several decades that SL teachers needed specialized preparation, as evidenced by the existence of SL programs within faculties of education. However, these SL teacher education programs were not prepared to address the needs of a French as second language teacher who was to teach all subjects in the target language (Calvé, 1983; Obadia, 1984; Klinck, 1985).

There was evidence of certain widespread misconceptions that continued to plague the SL teaching profession and to confound efforts to establish and demand special qualifications for FI teachers and to establish specialized preparation for them. One of the major problems was the differing attitudes toward teacher competency in the French language. Two erroneous assumptions hindered efforts to professionalize FI teaching: (1) that one only need speak the language to be able to teach it, and (2) that regular program preparation coupled with competence in French was all that needed to teach in FI (Massey, 1980; Obadia, 1984; Met, 1989). These assumptions reflected similar ones that had existed almost a century earlier when it was believed that learning a language was the equivalent of being able to teach it (Kelly, 1969; Strasheim, 1991). Countering these assumptions, Calvé (1979) stated that "... there is, in most cases, little correspondence between the

candidate's own experience with language, whether as a user or as a student, and the actual act of teaching a second language" (p. 114). However, such cautions went largely unheeded in the press to fill the increasing number of FI teaching positions. Existing hiring practices thus hindered the establishment of clear criteria for FI teachers, which were in turn needed to help effectively alleviate the shortage of teachers in the future.

In the 1980s, many educators began to strongly encourage the continuous preparation of FI teachers in the target language, and in specific methods for the teaching of the language (Calvé, 1983; Obadia, 1983; Wilton et al, 1984; Tardif, 1984; Annandale, 1985; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986; Hébert, 1987). Faculties of education at that time, however, were largely unprepared for FI teacher education. Although there was general agreement that FI teaching was not like first language or other SL teaching (Roy, 1980; Calvé, 1983; Obadia, 1984; Tardif, 1987; Burns & Olson, 1989; Lorenz & Met, 1989), there were few faculties that offered FI teacher preparation and among those who did, there was little agreement as to what such preparation should constitute. A national survey of 44 Canadian faculties of education (Coulombe, 1983) found that only 16 faculties offered FI teacher preparation, and a comparison of the programs showed a marked lack of agreement concerning professional qualifications of FI teachers. Further national studies during that decade (Wilton, et al., 1984;

Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986) showed that neither pre-service nor inservice programs were preparing enough FI teachers to meet the growing demand, and that course content and criteria used for judging the linguistic competence of FI teachers varied a great deal from province to province and even within provinces.

One aspect of the FI teacher shortage problem was unique within the historical context of SL teacher shortages. In the 1980s there was a significant drop in regular program enrolment at the national level, while FI enrolment continued to increase. In many areas there was a surplus of regular program teachers, although there continued to be a serious shortage of FI teachers. This situation afforded the opportunity for French as a second language programs to seek retraining for qualified regular program teachers in order to ease the problems on both sides (Schatz, 1988; Brine & Shapson, 1989).

Although rational in its approach, retraining for SL and specifically FI teaching demonstrated some inherent problems. Moeller (1991) in a follow-up study of an inservice project to promote French language competency among French teachers, states that although the program was well received at the time, the standards of proficiency were unrealistic given the time allotted for learning. This argument is supported by Schatz (1988) who describes important questions and concerns that were voiced in

Ontario concerning realistic objectives for retraining programs for prospective Core French and FI teachers. Even with the limited information about the long-term success of existing retraining programs, the consensus appears to be that regular pre-service education programs are more cost effective than retraining programs (Lapkin, Swain & Shapson, 1990).

Freeman (1989) claims that there are two persistent misconceptions about SL teacher education that have prevented teacher preparation programs from adequately responding to teachers' needs. The first misconception is that SL teacher preparation is generally concerned about the transmission of knowledge (i.e. skills in linguistics, language acquisition, and methodologies). The second is that transmission of that knowledge will lead to effective practice. Demoralized by the failure of the "true" SL methods of the the 1960s and 1970s, especially when practised on a varied school clientele, and influenced by the emergent research on learning styles, SL teachers in the 1980s found an eclectic approach to be a logical imperative (Strasheim, 1991). Teacher education institutions at the time, however, generally failed in responding to the need for the development of effective SL pedagogy, and retained a paternalistic and prescriptive approach (Lange, 1990; Richards, 1990; Strasheim, 1991). Rosenholtz (1989) reflected that when public support for schools wanes, policy makers will not be easily persuaded to loosen their

grip on teachers (p. 221). Given the state of affairs in SL teacher preparation, this statement certainly seemed to hold true.

Richards (1990) claims that the degree of professionalization of SL teachers can be judged by the extent to which the methods and procedures they use are based on a body of theoretical knowledge and research. Many educators have criticized the lack of descriptive and qualitative research in SL teaching, a situation which has perpetuated the view of SL teaching as a purely scientific process (Calvé, 1983; Carey, 1984; Klink, 1985; Obadia, 1985; Fillmore & Valadez, 1986; Freeman, 1989). This disconcerting lack of qualitative research in FI can perhaps be understood in terms of the political pressures exerted by parents and administrators to focus research efforts on immersion outcomes rather than on immersion processes (Tardif & Weber, 1987). FI was from the beginning considered an integral part of other larger social and political concerns, such as Canadian Studies and the Canadian identity (Farquhar, 1983), but pressure from a public that is not as interested in the cultural objectives of French language teaching as they are with the instrumental objectives of learning French, has limited attention in this area (Olson & Burns, 1981; Alvarez, 1987).

Although FI from its very inception has been one of the most widely researched SL programs to exist, research on the pedagogy that produces bilingual students has been neglected (Bibeau, 1982;

Tardif, 1984; Salomone, 1991). In a literature review covering the decade between 1975 and 1985, Bernhardt & Hammadou (1987) state that only 78 articles were published on the general topic of foreign language teacher education in the U.S. during that time. The authors claim that, on the whole, the writings articulated no theoretical framework for the statements they contained and that they indicated an unconscionable lack of awareness of the more general teacher education literature (p. 293). The field had relied on the discussions among experienced foreign language educators about the educational needs of foreign language teachers as the experts continued to perceive them, rather than on the principled collection of data and information (Lange 1979; McIntyre, 1980; Brumfit & Rossner, 1982; Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987). Referring to what can happen to curriculum development in such cases, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) state that when people cannot judge between conflicting sets of assumptions because of their lack of knowledge, the relative political power of the holders of the various positions will determine which position will prevail (p. 99). It would seem, then, that for lack of research to support a different model of SL teacher preparation, the widely accepted technical, scientific one persisted.

Over the the last six years, several national studies (CEA, 1992; Obadia & Martin, 1993; Martin et al., 1993) have indicated some changes in the availability of qualified FI teachers. One factor

that has effected a change is that although FI enrolment continued to increase nationally over the five-year time period between 1987 to 1991, the overall rate of enrolment decreased from 10.4% in 1987 to 3.5% in 1991 (Statistics Canada). In a recent national study of FI teacher shortages (Obadia & Martin, 1993), virtually all the school districts surveyed indicated that it is easier for them to find FI teachers than in previous years. There remains, however, a serious shortage of formally prepared FI teachers and of FI teachers able to teach in specialty areas. These results generally support the findings of the national survey done by the CEA in 1992, in which sixty percent of the school districts responding felt there was no shortage of FI teachers. A lack of FI teachers with specific preparation was also noted, however, along with problems of finding teachers whose competence in the French language could be deemed sufficient.

The indication of a lack of teachers with specific preparation for FI is corroborated by findings from a national survey of professional development needs of FI teachers (Day, et al., 1993). The survey found that over two-fifths of the teachers responding had received no specialized preparation either during or after their pre-service education. Over two-thirds expressed a serious need for opportunities to (a) maintain and develop their French language skills and (b) gain experience with francophone cultures.

A survey done in 1992 (Martin et al., 1993) found that there is now a substantially larger number of education faculties (28 out of 50) offering FI teacher preparation, and that the number of FI teachers with pre-service preparation has steadily increased over the last six years. There remains among the teacher education institutions, however, a clear lack of a common definition of the "prepared" FI teacher and there is marked disparity in the testing of competency in the French language for entry into and graduation from the different programs. In their study of pre-service FI teacher education, Day and Shapson (1993) also found significant discrepancies between programs, and have highlighted the need for coherent FI teacher preparation programs rather than isolated courses.

Danesi and Mollica (1988) state that SL teaching has finally broken away from the method notion and has emerged as separate from teaching *per se* (p. 438). Much work has been accomplished in describing the essential components of FI teacher education (Calvé, 1979; Bibeau, 1982; Stern, 1983; Tardif, 1984; Obadia, 1984; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986), but SL methodology research at the start of the 1990s has still not produced a single dominant theory or even a few widely accepted competing theories for SL learning and teaching (Richards, 1990; Baily, Hadley, Magnan & Swaffar, 1991). Theories such as Krashen's theory of

"comprehensible input" (Krashen & Terrell, 1982) has helped define and shape the field of language teaching, but there is still a lack of sufficient findings to generalize about effective procedures and materials for providing such input.

In the last few years, there appear to have been some changes of note in the situation of FI teacher shortage. At this point, however, most of these changes seem to be cosmetic and do not as yet promise a significant change in a system that has been struggling for a century to eliminate the shortage of SL teachers. There appears to be a slowing of FI enrolment and there are fewer school districts that have serious problems finding FI teachers. Yet, the majority of practising FI teachers have had no pre-service preparation and two-fifths have had neither pre-service nor inservice preparation. Currently, over 50% (28/50) of Canadian faculties of education offer preparation specific to FI (Martin et al., 1993), yet a comparison of the structure and content of the offerings show that there is little agreement as to the definition of a "qualified" FI teacher. In 1984, approximately 70% of FI teachers across the country were native speakers (Wilton et al., 1984), and this percentage remains virtually the same today (CEA, 1992; Obadia & Martin, 1993). Yet, for the remaining almost one-third of FI teachers who are not native speakers, there are still no common criteria among school districts or faculties of education as to (a) what constitutes fluency appropriate to teaching in FI nor (b) how

effectively maintain and improve it (Collinson, 1989). There remains, therefore, a question as to the roles that quantitative and qualitative interpretation play in judging whether or not there has been, in fact, a lessening of teacher shortages in FI.

Conclusion

Change is a non-normative concept. To say that change has taken place is not to automatically make a judgement about its desirability (Schubert, 1986), yet attitudes expressed concerning changes in FI teacher shortages suggest that there is widespread acceptance of unstudied assumptions regarding criteria for assessment of the situation. Looking at the overall picture of FI teacher shortages, Sarason's notion (1982) of things rarely changing in a significant way may be valid. There has been a conceptual way of thinking that has allowed FI to be driven by achievement data, isolated practice and ad hoc decision making that has left it open to risk and criticism (Burns, Hâché & Haynes, 1993). Studies indicate that the problem of actually finding an adequate number of FI teachers may be lessening. The reality of "What is an FI teacher?", however, has been overlooked by FI researchers and evaluators (Safty, 1989). When one says there is or is not a shortage of *qualified* FI teachers the tacit question remains, "What is a *qualified* FI teacher?". Depending on the answer to that question, shortages may or may not exist, regardless of what the quantitative data may indicate.

Speaking of teachers in general, Hoyle and Megarry (1980) claim that it is unfair to students that untrained teachers should learn on the job. If it is accepted as true that FI teachers need specialized preparation, then recent studies (CEA, 1992; Day et al., 1993; Obadia & Martin, 1993) indicate that, in a significant number of FI classrooms across the country, on-the-job teacher preparation is a reality. The definition of the FI teacher still appears to be subject to the whims of supply and demand as has been the case of SL teachers over the last century. Burns (1988) writes that when second language policy is rhetorical, unclear or non-directional, it may have the unintended effect of hindering effective implementation of French as a second language as a system. Policy makers pursuing a strictly technical approach, have tended to engage in solutions derived out of an inability or, in some cases, an unwillingness to deal with the real problem (Wise, 1977).

The FI teacher shortage has tended to stretch the definition of a qualified FI teacher until it almost belies any specialization. On a more hopeful note, if there is now at least a sufficient supply of teachers to fill FI positions, it may furnish a stable base upon which to openly and steadfastly confront important qualitative issues, and to establish appropriate guidelines based on sound pedagogy and educational policy that is sensitive to the social and historical contexts of educational reform.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Description of the Sample

At the time of the survey (April through June, 1992) a total of forty-five school districts in B. C. offered FI programs. With the intention contacting all of them, a list of all these districts was obtained from the 1992 B. C. Ministry of Education document French Programs in British Columbia, and from The CPF immersion registry (1991-92). These documents also furnished the names and phone numbers of FI contact people for the programs within each district. All forty-five of districts agreed to participate in the study, and representatives from each of these districts were interviewed.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire including both closed and open-ended questions was developed (see Appendix) for interviewing the school districts. The questionnaire was identical to the one used in the national survey conducted by Obadia and Martin in 1992. It was pre-tested on representatives of four B. C. school districts. Based on their feedback, some questions were reformulated.

Questions 1 to 3 were for the purpose of describing the district program by indicating which FI programs were offered,

what year they had been established, and how many students were enroled.

Questions 4 and 5 asked for enrolment estimates for the following year, enrolment predictions for the next five years, and reasons for the estimates and predictions.

Questions 6 to 11 asked for information regarding numbers of FI teachers and the levels at which they worked or the subjects they taught. The questions asked (a) for numbers of elementary and secondary FI teachers over the five years leading up to 1992, (b) whether or not there was a shortage of qualified FI teachers at the time of the interview, (c) if there was a shortage, in what teaching areas, (d) what the situation of teacher availability in preceding years had been, (e) how the past and current situation of FI teacher availability compared to that of the Regular program, and (f) what were the district's predictions of need for FI teachers for the following five years.

Questions 12 to 20 addressed the present and previous hiring practices of school districts in regard to FI and Regular program teachers. The questions asked dealt with the system of recruitment of teachers, criteria for selection, and numbers of teachers with specific preparation to teach in FI.

Questions 21 and 22 asked for perceptions regarding retention of FI teachers in school districts and measures taken to retain them.

Question 23 asked for any further comments that the respondent wished to make.

Procedures for the Study

All 45 school districts in British Columbia were contacted by telephone between the months of April and June, 1992. Names of contact persons for FI programs in each district had been established using Ministry documents. Respondents were requested to participate in the survey and were given over the phone a general outline of the questionnaire. If they needed time to collect statistics or other information, a convenient time was then established when they would be contacted again for completion of the interview. Some respondents referred the interviewer to another person whom they felt was more qualified to answer the questions. In some cases, the interviewer was referred to another person to answer only selected questions that the first respondent felt unprepared to answer.

Interviews were structured using a prepared questionnaire and all respondents were asked the same basic questions. Answers were recorded manually during the interview. For those questions

which had one-word or two-word answers or that were multiple-choice answers, the exact answer was recorded. In the case of the more open-ended questions, the answers were recorded in point form, attempting as much as possible to maintain the integrity of the response.

Data analysis

Responses to closed-ended questions were manually coded and analyzed. Frequency tables and histograms were used to summarize and display the data. The quantitative analysis furnished:

(1) a descriptive profile of FI programs in B. C.: types of FI programs offered, student enrolment, numbers and types of teachers, recruiting, hiring and teacher retention practices, comparisons to Regular programs;

(2) predictions concerning the future of FI programs in B. C.: student enrolment, numbers of teachers needed.

Answers to the more open-ended questions were quantified for interpretation. Precoded response categories were established in anticipation of responses to some of these items. Responses were coded and classified into these various categories, and new categories were created when necessary. The qualitative analysis offered:

(1) predictions concerning FI enrolment and the need for FI teachers;

(2) opinions concerning qualifications and preparation of FI teachers;

(3) reasons for difficulty in retaining FI teachers;

(4) comments that the respondent wished to make in addition to those requested in the questionnaire.

Reflections on the Methodology

Language of Communication

The questionnaire used in the school district interviews was formulated in English. The final report was to be written in English, and it was known that some districts would not necessarily be represented by fluent French speakers. If the questionnaires had been sent to each district to be filled out in writing, there would have been little change to this original intent. It became apparent during phone interviews, however, that the question of language was to be negotiated. The interviewer, who was fluent in both English and French, explained at the beginning of the interview that the questionnaire was in English. There were cases where she was either asked to conduct the interview in French or where she judged by certain responses that it would be expedient to offer to

speak in French. There were also cases where the interviewee asked for the questions to be read in English but preferred to answer in French. The interviewer dealt with each situation individually, keeping in mind that her primary goal was to obtain information, regardless of the language used. When respondents gave answers to open-ended questions in French, they were copied down in that language and later translated.

The implications of translation, from both receptive and expressive perspectives, are innumerable, and were not addressed within the parametres of the study. It is nonetheless of interest that the concept of negotiated meaning in language communication became a distinct part of a study of FI programs.

Ethnographic Considerations

The area of data collection from interviews creates some discomfort because of the inherent fallibility of human perception and choice. The interviewer had been actively involved in FI programs in British Columbia for over ten years. This fact could not help but make even a guided interview less formal and prone to extension, partly because of the interviewer's interest and extensive knowledge of the program, and partly because she had previously worked with many of the respondents. Although the study focussed specifically on the issue of FI teacher shortages, the knowledge bases of the interviewer and the interviewees

concerning FI programs often gave the interactions a much wider angle.

Objectivity in interview situations is a moot point and is best addressed with acute awareness of the context rather than extreme skepticism of the data collected therein. As much or more can be learned through awareness of, and constant reflection on the grey areas of research methodology, as through the actual data that has been collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion of the Study: FI Program Profiles: Present and Future

This chapter contains the analysis and discussion of data related to (a) the types of FI programs offered in B. C. and when they began, and to (b) present and future enrolment in FI. The data were collected between April and June, 1992, through telephone interviews conducted with all 45 school districts in British Columbia offering FI programs. The results have been compiled according to the questions asked during the interviews.

Results of the Study

Types of FI Programs Offered in B. C. and When They Began

Question. What French Immersion programs are offered in your school district?

The following table shows the numbers and percentages of the various FI programs offered in the 45 districts surveyed.

Table I

Types of FI Programs Offered in B. C.

Early Immersion Only	Late Immersion Only	Both Early and Late Immersion		Total
24 districts	8 districts	13 districts	=	45 districts
(53%)	(18%)	(29%)	=	(100%)

Twenty-four districts offered exclusively Early immersion; eight districts offered exclusively Late immersion; thirteen districts offered both Early and Late immersion.

Two districts indicated their intention to open a Middle immersion program; one will open in 1993 and the other in 1994.

Question. In what year did your school district begin to offer an immersion program?

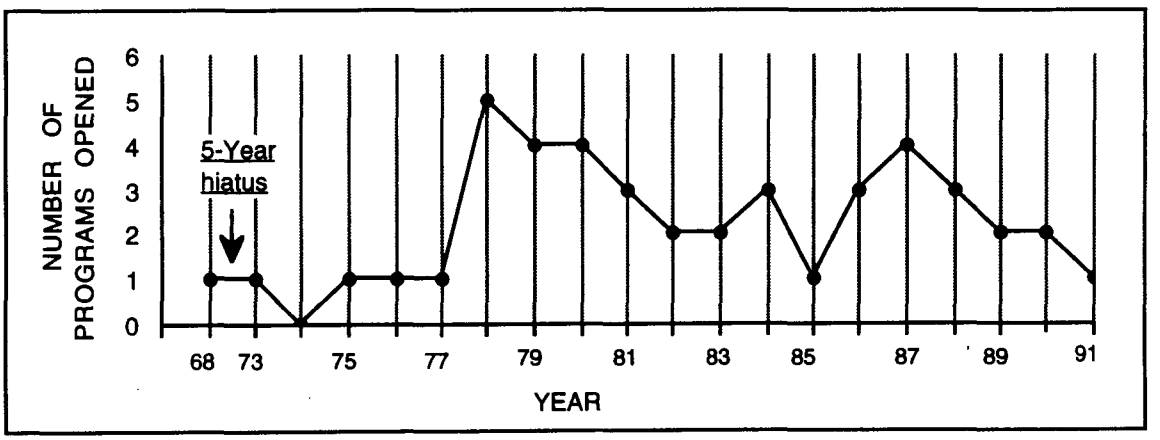
Five districts established FI programs during the ten-year period between 1968 and 1977. The first FI program opened in 1968. The second program opened five years later in 1973, and the third program opened in 1975. One program opened in 1976 and one in 1977.

Nineteen FI programs were established during the five-year period between 1978 and 1982. Five programs opened in 1978, four in 1979, four in 1980, three in 1981, and two in 1982.

Thirteen FI programs were established during the five-year period between 1983 and 1987. Two programs opened in 1983, three in 1984, one in 1985, three in 1986, and four in 1987.

Eight FI programs were established between 1988 and 1991. Three programs opened in 1988, two in 1989, two in 1990, and one in 1991.

Figure 1. Years and numbers of FI programs established in B. C.



Present and Future Enrolment

Question. What is the approximate number of students that are registered in French Immersion in your district this year?

The total enrolment in FI programs for the school year 1991-92 was approximately 28,290 students. This included approximately 20,187 elementary students (60% of the population) and approximately 8,103 secondary students (40% of the population).

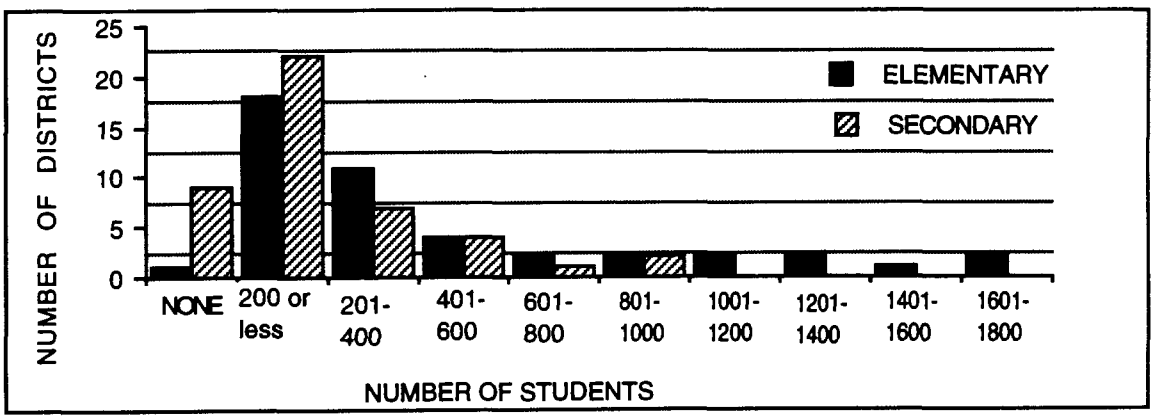
Elementary FI enrolment. Forty-four districts enroled elementary FI students. One district had no elementary FI enrolment because it offered only a Late mmersion program which began in Grade 8.

Forty percent (18/45) of the districts had 200 elementary FI students or less. Twenty-four percent (11/45) had between 201 and 400 students. Nine percent (4/45) had between 401 and 600 students. Four percent each (2/45 each) had the following numbers of elementary FI students: 601 to 800; 801 to 1000; 1001 to 1200; 1201 to 1400. One district had between 1401 and 1600 elementary FI students. Four percent (2/45) had between 1601 and 1800 elementary FI students.

Secondary FI Enrolment. Thirty-six of the forty-five districts offering FI programs enroled secondary FI students. The other nine districts had no secondary FI enrolment because the lead classes had not yet reached the secondary level.

Forty-nine percent (22/45) of the districts reported a secondary FI enrolment of 200 FI students or less. Sixteen percent (7/45) had between 201 and 400 students. Nine percent (4/45) had between 401 and 600 students. One district had between 601 and 800 students. Four percent (2/45) had between 801 and 1000 students.

Figure 2. Elementary and secondary FI enrolment in B. C. in 1991-92



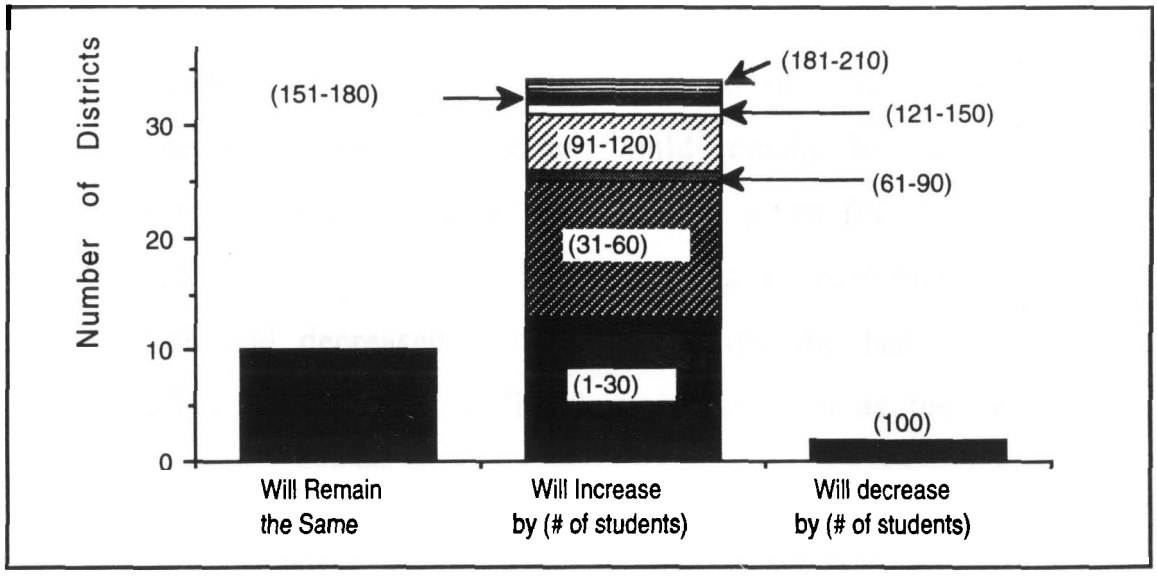
Question. How many students do you estimate will be registered in French Immersion in your district next year?

The estimated provincial total was approximately 30,030 students registered in FI programs for the next school year (1992-93), indicating an overall increase of 1740 students (6%).

Thirty-four districts (76%) predicted that numbers of FI students would increase in 1992-93. Ten districts (22%) predicted that the number of FI students registered would remain the same. One district (2%) predicted a decrease in FI enrolment.

Of the thirty-four districts predicting an increase in FI student population, forty-one percent (14/34) estimated that there would be an increase of 1 to 30 students. Thirty-two percent (11/34) estimated an increase of 31 to 60 students. One district estimated an increase of 61 to 90 students. Fifteen percent (5/34) estimated an increase of 91 to 120 students. One district each predicted the following increases: 121 to 150; 151 to 180; 181 to 210.

Figure 3. FI enrolment predictions for 1992-93 in B. C.



Question. What are your predictions for the next five years concerning numbers of students registered in French Immersion in your district? What are the reasons for your predictions?

Fifteen school districts (33%) predicted that FI registration would continue to increase over the next five years. These districts gave one or more reasons for their predictions. Ten districts gave as a reason that their lead classes had not yet reached Grade 12. Three districts indicated increased enrolment over the last few years. One district reported its intention of opening a Middle immersion program the following year. One district each gave the following reasons: We have confirmed an increase through a district-wide survey concerning FI registration; we have

established a policy to publicly promote FI; we are always optimistic.

Twenty-three districts (51%) predicted that the numbers of students registered in FI programs would remain the same over the next five years. One or more reasons were given for the predictions. Sixteen districts reported signs of enrolment stabilization and decreased growth rate during the last few years. Five districts reported that political problems such as the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the growth of APEC (Association for the Preservation of English in Canada) were affecting growth rates in FI programs. Three districts reported a policy of controlled intake whereby a restricted number of FI classes were maintained. Two districts indicated that some parents were feeling insecure about the program and were less willing to commit. One district reported that students from lead classes in the FI program were moving out of town. One district indicated that it was starting a Japanese immersion program.

Seven districts (16%) predicted that the number of FI students would decrease over the next five years. One or more reasons were given for the predictions. All seven districts indicated a drop in enrolment in the last few years, with two of these districts indicating specifically a high attrition rate at the secondary level. Two districts also indicated that national politics (Meech

Lake Accord, APEC) were negatively affecting the program. Two districts reported that improved Core French Programs affected FI enrolment. One district each gave the following reasons: Late immersion is becoming more popular; there's a significant increase in the English as a Second Language (ESL) population; FI and prospective FI students are moving away; FI parents are reluctant or unable to commit themselves to transport their children to FI centres; local industry lay-offs cause economic problems for FI parents; FI parents are dissatisfied with the large school setting in which the FI program is placed.

Table 2

Comparison of FI Enrolment Predictions in B. C. for 1992-93 and for the Next Five Years

	No. (%) of Responses		
Predict	1993	1994 - 1998	Reasons Given (in decreasing order)
Numbers Will increase	34 (76%)	15 (33%)	Lead classes moving up; increase in enrolment; Middle immersion to open; program promotion; district survey results; optimism.
Numbers Will Remain The Same	10 (22%)	23 (51%)	Stabilizing enrolment; political situation; controlled intake; parents hesitant to commit; FI population moving away; starting Japanese immersion.
Numbers Will Decrease	1 (2%)	7 (16%)	Drop in enrolment; attrition at secondary; improved Core French Program; popularity of Late FI; growing ESL population; people moving away; industry lay-offs; parents hesitant about or dissatisfied with program.

Summary and Discussion of the Results

Program Descriptions

Early immersion is by far the most popular type of FI program in B. C. Over eighty percent of districts offer it, with over fifty percent offering it exclusively. The overwhelming popularity of Early immersion, followed by Late immersion, and with Middle immersion a distant third, has been corroborated at the national level in the recent survey done by Obadia & Martin (1993).

Over one-half (25/45) of the FI programs in B. C. opened in the eight-year period between 1976 and 1984. This corresponds to the national trend indicated in the surveys conducted by the Canadian Education Association (1992) and Obadia and Martin (1993) which found that a high concentration of programs were established in the late 1970s and early 1980s. None of the studies provides any specific reasons for the establishment of so many programs during that period. Hopkins and Reid (1985) note that these years were generally characterized by economic and social resurgence and by extensive attempts at reform in education. In Canada, two additional motivational factors were present during that time: (1) federal policies related to bilingualism facilitated the creation of FI programs, and (2) particularly favourable research on FI programs was becoming available.

It is of note that in B. C., there was also a six-year period between 1985 and 1991 where a substantial number (over one-third) of FI programs opened. Again, no specific reasons were given. It is possible that the geographical distance from francophone centres and from large population areas establishing FI programs may have had the effect of simply delaying the widespread implementation of the program in B.C. There may also have been a policy of "wait and see" on the part of some districts wishing to have more assurance of success with the program.

In 1991-92, the majority of FI students (60%) were at the elementary level, although it is to be noted that one-fifth of the districts had FI programs in which the lead population had not yet reached the secondary level.

The majority of districts reported a total FI population of 400 or less students. Over forty percent of all districts indicated an FI enrolment of 200 students or less and approximately twenty percent indicated a population of 201 to 400 FI students.

Present and Future Enrolment

The total provincial enrolment in FI programs in 1991-92, as indicated by this survey, was 28,290 and this corresponds to the

numbers indicated by Statistics Canada (28,598) for the 1991-92 school year[1].

The following chart shows FI enrolment figures and growth rates of FI programs in B. C. since 1987 and includes the predicted 1992-93 enrolment of 30,030.

Table 3

Enrolment Trends in FI Programs Between 1987 and 1993

School Year	No. of students enroled in FI	Rate of growth
1987-88	21,404	--
1988-89	24,292	+ 13.5%
1989-90	25,938	+ 6.8%
1990-91	27,984	+ 7.9%
1991-92	28,290	+ 1%
1992-93	30,030 (predicted)	+ 6.1%

Note: Enrolment figures for 1987 through 1991 were taken from Statistics Canada publications of Langue de minorité et langue seconde dans l'enseignement (1987-1991)

The rate of growth in FI enrolment has decreased over the last six years, although the number of students has steadily

[1] 1991-92 enrolment figures obtained from Statistics Canada are to be considered unofficial as they have not yet been published.

increased. The growth rate had dropped to approximately one-percent in 1991-92. Districts were obviously optimistic about the 1992-93 enrolment, which showed a predicted increase of approximately six percent.

Although districts generally indicated a downward trend in the rate of enrolment over the next five years, it is of note that one-third of the districts still predicted that their enrolment would increase during that same time period.

Program expansion due to lead classes moving through the system was the main reason for predicted increases over the next five years. Findings from two previous national studies (CEA, 1992; Obadia & Martin, 1993) reiterate this as a major reason for increased enrolment. Apart from some districts merely noting a trend of increased enrolment, several districts in this survey indicated reasons that reflect a positive or proactive attitude toward the program: opening another type of FI program, conducting a community survey, public promotion of the program, optimistic outlook for the program. The national study conducted by the CEA (1992) also noted such trends as an important reason for the increase in FI enrolment.

Most districts predicting either a stabilization or decrease in FI enrolment over the next five years based their predictions, at least in part, on the fact of decreasing enrolment at the entry level

and at the secondary level. National politics concerning bilingualism was the second most frequent reason given, followed by administrative, economic and demographic issues affecting FI parents' ability and willingness to commit to the program. All these reasons are reiterated in the results of the national study conducted by Obadia and Martin (1993), although there appears to be more emphasis in B. C. on the possible negative effects of national political issues concerning bilingualism. In the nation-wide study conducted by the CEA (1992), the main reason given for decreases in FI enrolment was the existence of an increasingly wider variety of course and program offerings. This was mentioned by some districts in the B. C. study, but not by a significant number.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results and Discussion of the Study: FI Teachers: Availability, Numbers and Qualifications

This chapter contains the results and discussion of data gathered from interview questions concerning (a) past and present FI teacher availability; (b) the past, present and future numbers of FI teachers; and (c) the demographic, linguistic and professional profiles of FI teachers.

Results of the Study

Past and Present FI Teacher Availability

Question. In general, in *preceding* years, what was the situation concerning the availability of teachers qualified to teach in French Immersion?

Seven districts (16%) reported that in preceding years there was a sufficient number of qualified FI teacher candidates to satisfy the demand.

Thirty-eight districts (84%) reported that in preceding years, there was a lack of qualified FI teacher candidates. Thirty of these districts reported shortages of on-call teachers, with three districts indicating a lack of on-call teachers only. Twenty-nine districts reported shortages of FI teachers for specialty areas (e.g. learning

assistance, computers, library, etc.). Twenty-eight districts indicated a lack of secondary FI teachers. Fifteen districts indicated a shortage of intermediate FI teachers. Thirteen districts indicated a lack of primary FI teachers.

Question. How would you describe the *present* situation in your school district concerning the availability of teachers qualified to teach in French Immersion?

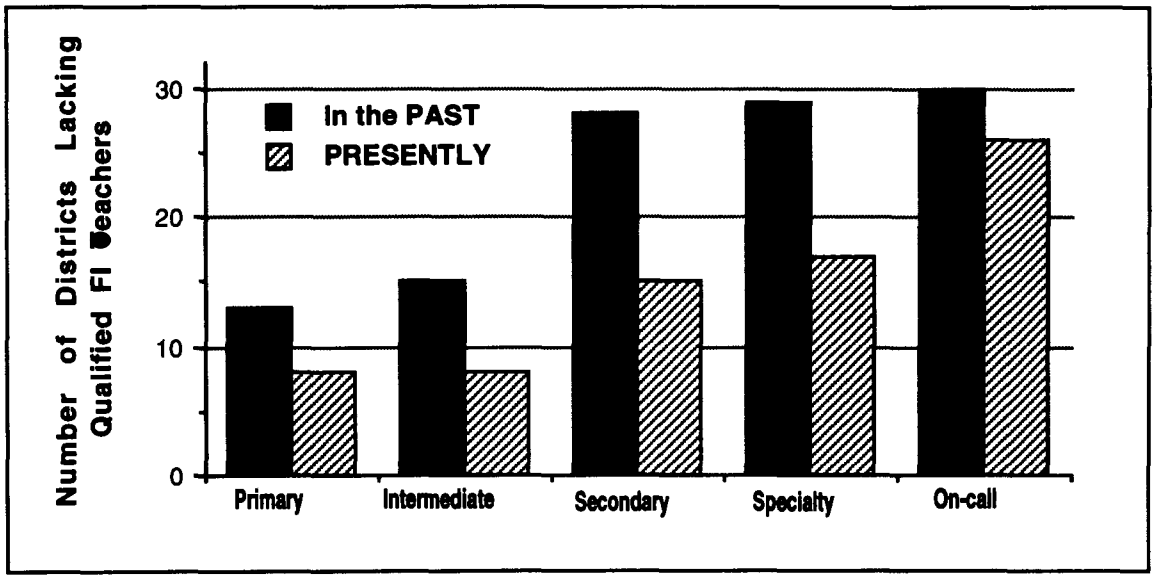
Fifteen districts (33%) indicated that there was presently a sufficient supply of qualified FI teacher candidates to satisfy the demand. The following were some unsolicited comments concerning the FI teacher supply: lots of applications this year; lots of good candidates; good retention rate this year; good labor climate; some lay-offs this year; excellent for the first time.

Thirty districts (66%) indicated a present lack of qualified FI teacher candidates. Twenty-six of these districts reported shortages of on-call teachers, with six districts indicating a lack of on-call teachers only. Seventeen districts reported shortages of FI teachers for specialty areas (e.g. learning assistance, computers, library, etc.). Fifteen districts indicated a lack of secondary FI teachers. Eight districts each indicated a lack of intermediate and primary FI teachers.

The following were some unsolicited comments concerning the present lack of FI teachers: often must hire unqualified on-call

teachers; nil availability of on-call teachers; terrible situation regarding on-call teachers; secondary Math and Science teachers hard to find; secondary Social Studies hard to find; we get a lot of applications but most candidates are not qualified for certification; impossible to find qualified learning assistance teachers; lack of French-speaking support staff.

Figure 4. Past and present areas of FI teacher shortages



Question. How did the above-mentioned situation regarding the availability of qualified French Immersion teachers in *preceding* years generally compare with the situation of the availability of qualified regular program teachers?

Twenty-six districts (58%) indicated that in the past it was much more difficult to find qualified FI teachers. Ten districts

(22%) indicated that it was a bit more difficult to find qualified FI teachers. Nine districts (20%) indicated that it was about the same for both sectors.

Question. How does the above-mentioned situation regarding the *present* availability of qualified French Immersion teachers generally compare with the situation of the availability of qualified regular program teachers?

Thirteen districts (29%) indicated that it was presently much more difficult to find qualified FI teachers. Thirteen districts (29%) indicated that it was a bit more difficult to find qualified FI teachers. Nineteen districts (42%) indicated that it was about the same for both sectors.

Past, present and future numbers of FI teachers

Question. Approximately how many full-time equivalent teachers teach or have taught in the French Immersion program in your district in the following years?

Forty-three districts responded to this question. Two districts could not furnish complete statistics. The following table shows the numbers of teachers in FI since 1987.

Table 4

Number and Rate of Increase in FI Teachers in B. C. from 1987 to 1992*

School Year	Elementary		Secondary	
1987-88	744	---	117.5	---
1988-89	824	(+ 10.8%)	138	(+ 17.4%)
1989-90	885	(+ 7.4%)	160.5	(+ 16.3%)
1990-91	942.5	(+ 6.5%)	206.5	(+ 17.8%)
1991-92	973.5	(+ 3.2%)	208.5	(+ 10.3%)

* Two school districts did not furnish complete statistics for these years and were not included in this table.

Question. What are your predictions for the next five years concerning the number of French Immersion teachers that will be needed in your district?

Nineteen school districts (42%) predicted that the number of FI teachers needed would increase over the next five years. Ten of these districts gave as a reason that their lead classes had not yet reached Grade 12. Seven districts indicated increasing enrolment as a reason. Two districts said that they would be opening a Middle immersion program. Two districts indicated that the easing of the national political situation would have a positive effect on enrolment. One district each gave the following reasons: We have

conducted a district-wide survey concerning FI registration; we have established a policy to publicly promote FI; we experience continual FI teacher turnover.

Twenty-one districts (47%) predicted that the number of FI teachers needed would remain the same over the next five years. Eleven of these districts gave as a reason that enrolment was stabilizing. Four districts reported that political problems such as the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the growth of APEC (Association for the Preservation of English in Canada) were slowing enrolment growth rates in FI programs. Four districts indicated that there was less FI teacher turnover than previously. One district each indicated budget restraints and improved Core French programs as reasons.

Three districts (7%) predicted that the number of FI teachers needed over the next five years would diminish. All three districts indicated a drop in enrolment in the last few years. One district each gave the following reasons: The national political situation has a negative effect; there are more ESL students; families are moving; the FI school is too big.

Two districts (4%) could not predict the number of FI teachers that will be needed over the next five years. Reasons given were the following: We are involved in developing First Nations

programs; the political situation is unstable; we will be introducing a new Core French program.

Table 5

Predicted Need for FI Teachers in B. C. Between 1993 and 1998

	No. (%) of Responses	Reasons given (in decreasing order)
Will need more teachers	19 (42%)	Lead classes moving up; increase in enrolment; Middle immersion to open; political situation easing; did a survey; will promote the program; FI teacher turnover.
Will need same no. of teachers	21 (47%)	Stabilizing enrolment; national politics; slowing enrolment; less FI teacher turnover; budget restraints; improved Core French program.
Will need fewer teachers	3 (7%)	Declining enrolment; national politics; more ESL students; families moving away; FI school too big.
Cannot Predict	2 (4%)	Developing First Nations programs; unstable political situation; will introduce new Core French program.

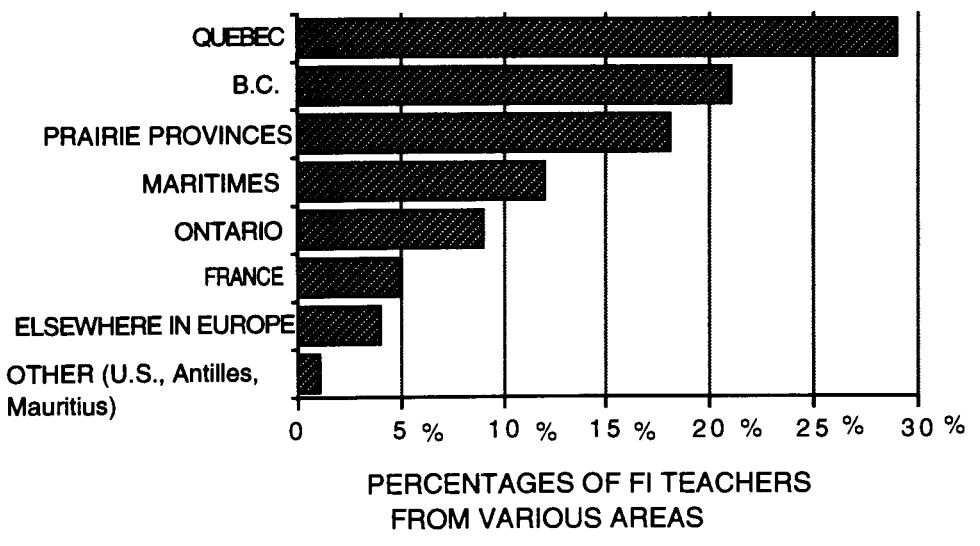
Demographic, Linguistic and Professional Profile of FI Teachers

Question. Using numbers 1 through 4 (with number 1 indicating the highest percentage) please indicate where most of the French Immersion teachers in your district come from.

The following approximate percentages were calculated, indicating where FI teachers came from: Quebec (29%); British Columbia (21%); the Prairies (18%); the Maritimes (12%); Ontario (9%); France (5%); other European countries (4%); other areas (1%). In the category of "Other areas", the United States was mentioned four times and Mauritius once.

One district indicated that it did not know the percentages.

Figure 5. Places of origin of FI teachers working in B. C.



Note: One district did not know the percentage.

Question. Approximately what percentage of the French Immersion teachers in your district are native French speakers?

Percentages of native French speakers among FI teachers in school districts ranged from zero to one hundred percent. The following chart shows the different ranges of percentages:

Table 6

Percentages of FI Teachers Working in B. C. Who are Native Speakers

	Percentage of Native Speakers Per District		
	0-30%	31-60%	70-100%
No. (%) of Responses	4 (9%)	17 (38%)	24 (53%)

The average percentage of native speakers was sixty-five percent.

Question. Among the French Immersion teachers presently employed in your district, what percentage approximately have specific specialized preparation for immersion teaching?

Percentages indicated by districts ranged from zero to one hundred percent. The following chart shows the range of percentages of FI teachers with specific preparation for FI.

Table 7

Percentages of FI Teachers Working in B. C. Who are Specifically Prepared for Immersion Teaching

	Percentages by District of Specifically Prepared FI Teachers					
	0-30%	31-60%	70-100%	Only a Few	Many	Don't know
No.	24	5	6	7	2	1
(%) of Responses	(53%)	(11%)	(13%)	(16%)	(4%)	(2%)

The average percentage of FI teachers with specific specialized preparation for immersion was approximately 31%.

Summary and Discussion of the Results

Teacher Availability

Many B. C. school districts have experienced significant and ongoing shortages of FI teachers. Although the number of districts presently indicating a shortage of teachers was approximately one-fifth less than in the past, it is of note that 66% of the school districts still experienced shortages in one or more teaching areas. This is in contrast to both of the recent national studies (CEA, 1992; Obadia & Martin, 1993) where only about 40% of the school districts indicated that they had a shortage of FI teachers.

Specialty, secondary and particularly on-call teachers remain the most difficult to find. While there has been a 60 to 90 percent improvement over the years in districts' ability to find primary, intermediate, secondary and specialty teachers for FI programs, the recruiting of on-call teachers has improved by only 15%. Approximately one-third of the districts reported a present lack of qualified secondary and specialty FI teachers, and almost three-fifths of the districts reported a present lack of on-call teachers. Although it has become easier than in the past to find FI teachers, approximately three-fifths of the districts still find it more difficult to find them than to find regular program teachers.

Numbers of FI Teachers

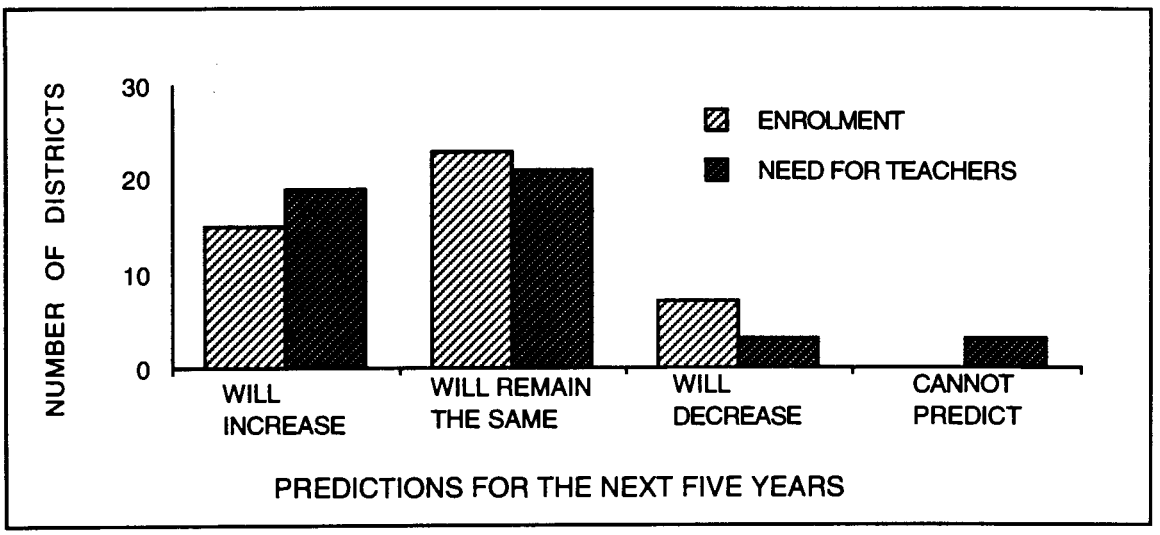
Between the years of 1987 and 1992 the number of elementary FI teachers increased 31% from approximately 744 teachers to approximately 973 teachers. During those same years, the number of secondary FI teachers increased 77% from approximately 117 to approximately 208 teachers. The main reason for the large difference in growth rate is the fact that a number of secondary FI programs opened each year as lead classes graduated from elementary school.

Although the actual number of FI teachers increased significantly at both elementary and secondary levels during the five-year period between 1987 and 1991, the rate of growth decreased. The growth rate slowed steadily at the elementary level from 10.8% in 1988 to 3.2% in 1991. The overall growth rate also decreased at the secondary level but in a more erratic fashion because of an unexplained increase in the rate in the 1990-91 school year.

Indications are strong that the number of FI teachers will increase over the next five years. Approximately two-fifths of the districts predicted an increase and another two-fifths indicated a stable number of FI teachers for those years. The following graph shows a significant correspondence between five-year predictions

concerning FI enrolment and predictions concerning the need for FI teachers.

Figure 6. Comparison of five-year FI enrolment predictions and five-year predictions of need for FI teachers



Except for infrequent mention of teacher turnover and budget restraints, the reasons given for predictions concerning the future need for FI teachers were generally the same as the reasons given for predictions concerning enrolment: lead classes moving up through the system, existing trends in enrolment, the reading of national and provincial political situations, school district policies and initiatives, demographic issues, FI parent considerations.

FI Teacher Profile

Quebec (a francophone province), the Prairies, Maritimes and Ontario (all of which have significant francophone populations) are

among the top five areas that supply FI teachers for B. C. programs. It is of note that B. C., an anglophone province with no significant francophone population, is second after Quebec, the province which supplies the most FI teachers.

Approximately two-thirds of FI teachers in B. C. are francophone. Over one-half of the districts surveyed reported a clear majority (70-100%) of native speakers. Recent national studies (CEA, 1992; Obadia and Martin, 1993) also showed that a majority of the districts had 70-100% of FI teachers who were francophone.

Approximately one-third of FI teachers in B. C. have specific preparation for immersion teaching. Approximately 15% of districts indicated a clear majority (70-100%) of immersion-trained teachers. This contrasts with a recent national study (Obadia & Martin, 1993) which reported that approximately 60% of districts had a clear majority of immersion-trained teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

Results and Discussion of the Study: Hiring Practices for FI Programs and Retention of FI Teachers

This chapter contains the compilation and discussion of interview data concerning (a) the recruitment and hiring of FI teachers and (b) FI teacher turnover and measures taken to retain FI teachers.

Results of the Study

Recruitment and Hiring of FI Teachers

Question. What measures does your school district presently take to attract qualified French Immersion teachers to your district?

Forty districts (89%) used newspaper ads as a means to attract prospective FI teachers. Fifteen of these districts placed ads in B. C. newspapers and twenty-five of them placed ads in both B. C. and out-of-province newspapers.

Nineteen districts (42%) attracted prospective FI teachers through their contact with faculties of education, in the form of ads, job fairs or meetings.

Eighteen districts (40%) reported that district representatives traveled to areas outside the district to interview prospective FI

teachers. The following destinations and numbers of districts were indicated: the Prairie provinces (14); elsewhere in British Columbia (12); Quebec (7); the Maritime provinces (4); Ontario (2).

Table 8

Travel Destinations of Districts Interviewing Prospective FI Teachers

Destinations for recruiting	No. of districts traveling
Prairie provinces	14
Elsewhere in B. C.	12
Quebec	7
Maritime provinces	4
Ontario	2

Eleven districts (24%) attracted prospective FI teacher candidates by encouraging FI teachers to accept student teachers into their classes.

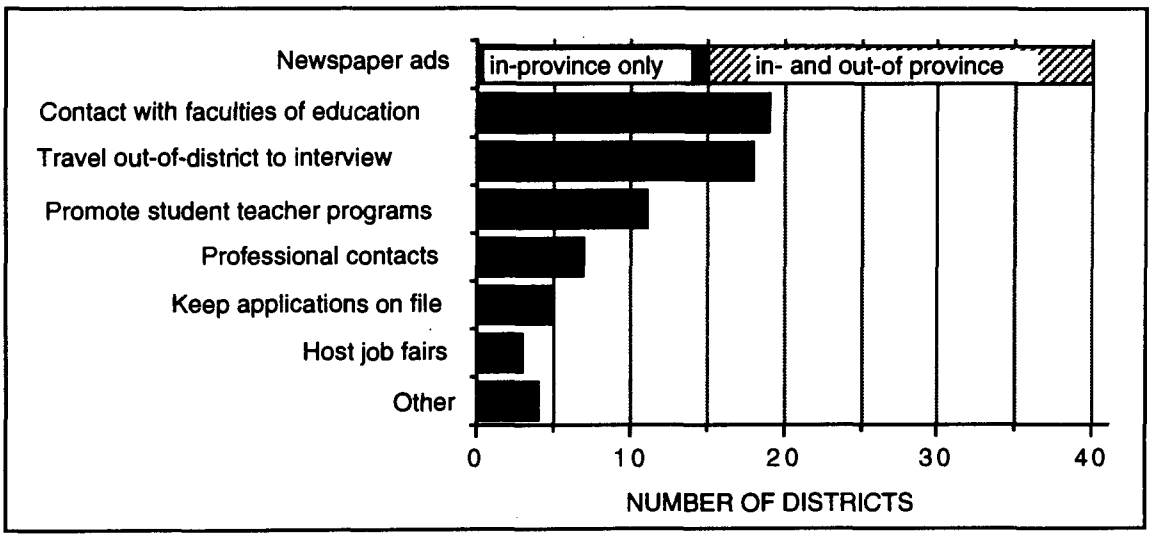
Seven districts (16%) used their professional contacts with FI teachers, other French coordinators, French monitors, a nearby military base, or local industry recruiters in order to find prospective candidates.

Five districts (11%) indicated that they kept on file the unsolicited applications they received each year.

Three districts (7%) recruited through job fairs that they hosted. Two of the districts hosted province-wide job fairs and one district hosted an in-district job fair.

One district each indicated that they recruited through: local postings for transfers, Employment Canada National Job Bank, ongoing recruiting throughout the year, the on-call teacher list.

Figure 7. Measures Taken by B. C. School Districts to Recruit FI Teachers



Question. What is your perception of the present number of immersion-trained teachers graduating from your provincial faculties of education?

The following table indicates the responses to this question.

Table 9

Perceptions Concerning the Number of Immersion-Trained Teachers Graduating From B. C. Faculties of Education

	More than Sufficient numbers	sufficient numbers	Insufficient numbers	Don't know
No. (%) of Responses	1 (2%)	5 (11%)	38 (84%)	1 (2%)

Question. In general, by what month is your district able to complete the hiring of French Immersion teachers for the following school year?

The 45 districts indicated the following months as those in which they were able to complete the hiring of FI teachers for the following school year: April (3/45); May (6/45); June (16/45); July (8/45); August (11/45). One district indicated that it had completed its hiring in May of the previous year, and in July and August in the year of the survey.

Question. In general, by what month is your district able to complete the hiring of regular program teachers for the following school year?

The 45 districts indicated the following months as those in which they were able to complete the hiring of Regular Program teachers for the following school year: April (2/45); May (11/45); June (24/45); July (3/45); August (2/45); September (2/45). One district indicated that it had completed its hiring in May of the previous year, and in July and August in the year of the survey.

Table 10

Months That Hiring of FI and Regular Program Teachers is Completed in B. C.

	No. of Responses Indicating Month That Hiring is Completed					
	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.
FI Program	3	6	16	8	11	--
Regular Program	2	11	24	3	2	2

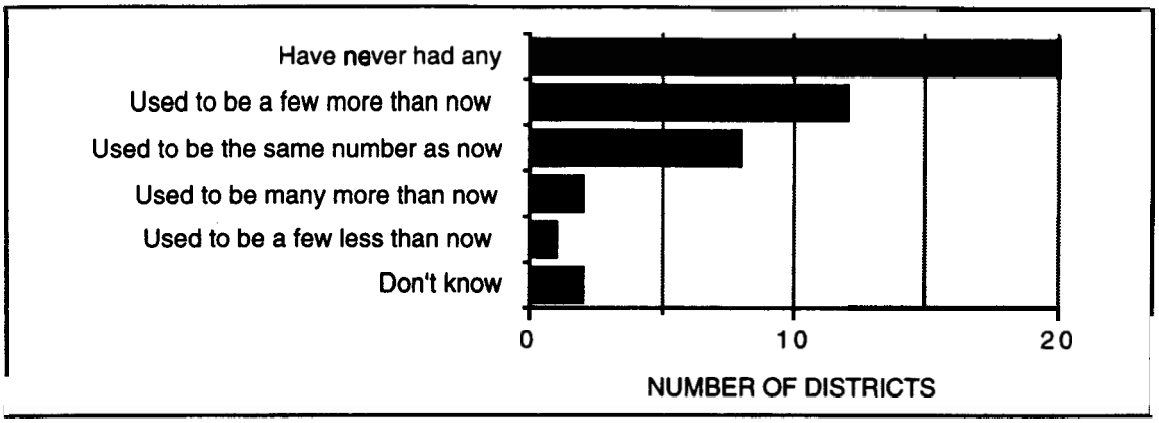
Question. If you presently employ any French Immersion teachers that cannot yet be certified in your province (i.e. they are working with special permission from the Ministry of Education), please indicate how many.

Eleven districts (24%) each reported that they presently employed one FI teacher that was not certified in B. C.

Question. In preceding years, how did the number of uncertified French Immersion teachers employed by your district compare with the present number?

Twenty (44%) districts indicated that there have never been uncertified FI teachers in their district. Twelve districts (27%) indicated that there used to be a few more uncertified FI teachers than now. Eight districts (18%) indicated that there used to be approximately the same number. Two districts (4%) indicated that there used to be many more uncertified FI teachers than now. One district (2%) indicated that there used to be a few less uncertified FI teachers than now. Two districts (4%) were unable to say what the situation was previously.

Figure 8. Comparison of past and present numbers of uncertified FI teachers in B. C.



Results of the Study

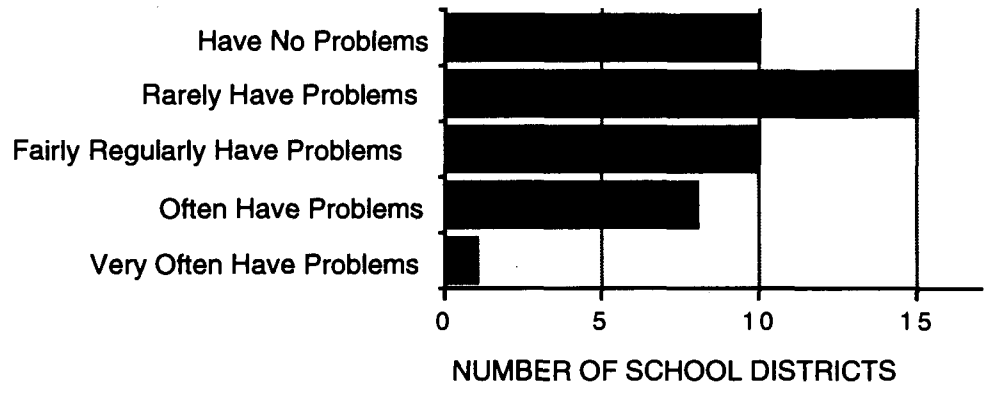
FI Teacher Turnover and Measures Taken to Retain FI teachers

Question. Does your school district have difficulty in retaining French Immersion teachers?

Ten districts (22%) indicated that they had no problem at all retaining FI teachers. Fifteen districts (33%) indicated that they rarely had a problem retaining FI teachers. Ten districts (22%) indicated that they fairly regularly had problems retaining FI teachers. Eight districts (18%) indicated that they often had problems retaining FI teachers. One district (2%) indicated that it very often had problems retaining FI teachers. One district indicated that it had no problems retaining FI teachers at the

elementary level, but fairly regularly had problems retaining FI teachers at the secondary level.

Figure 9. Levels of difficulty experienced by B. C. school districts in retaining FI teachers



Note: One district indicated no problems at the elementary level and fairly regular problems at the secondary level.

Question. If your district experiences difficulty in retaining French Immersion teachers, please comment on the reasons.

Most districts gave more than one reason for their difficulties in retaining FI teachers. Eighteen districts mentioned reasons related to cultural differences in that FI teachers missed their home province, experienced culture shock or lacked skills in English.

Fourteen districts mentioned reasons related to geographical considerations in that FI teachers preferred to live in the southern part of the province or in more metropolitan areas.

Eleven districts mentioned reasons that they deemed were related to the age group of many FI teachers in that they were often young, often single, mobile, less committed, or desirous of an active social life.

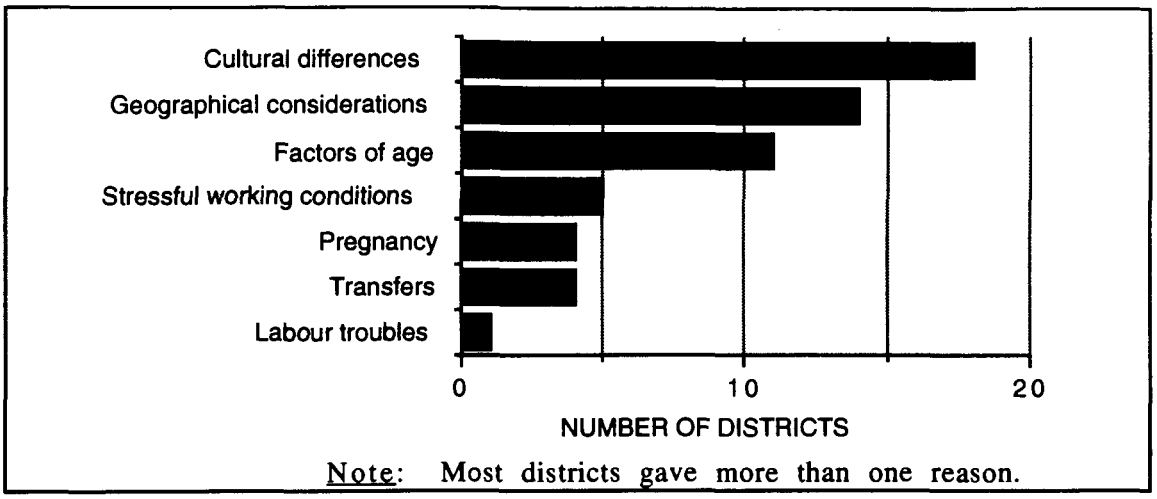
Five districts mentioned reasons related to stressful working conditions in that FI teachers were subjected to parental pressure, a lack of resources, working a small isolated program, or teaching multi-level classes of increasing numbers.

Four districts mentioned that pregnancy among female FI teachers was a cause of attrition.

Four districts mentioned reasons such as in-district transfers to administration or to the regular program, or to the transfer of a spouse working at the military base.

One district mentioned labor troubles as causing some FI teachers to quit.

Figure 10. Reasons given by B. C. school districts for difficulty in retaining FI teachers



Note: Most districts gave more than one reason.

Question. If your district takes any specific measures to help retain French Immersion teachers, please indicate what they are.

Thirty-four districts (76%) indicated that they took specific measures to help retain FI teachers. Most of these districts indicated more than one measure. Twenty-two districts indicated that they made an effort to provide social opportunities and support for FI teachers such as: a wine and cheese and other orientation activities at the beginning of the year; a buddy system for becoming familiar with the community; opportunities to meet members of francophone community; local activities organized by Canadian Parents for French; hiring qualified teachers who are friends of FI teachers in the district.

Seventeen districts indicated that they make an effort to offer professional support for French immersion teachers such as: coordinators, consultants, learning assistance teachers, extra staffing, classroom resources, French monitors, bilingual secretaries, bilingual librarians, mentors, partnering with other northern communities, small classes, French language classes, release time to help with administration, orientation sessions, active district promotion of the program, carefully chosen administrators.

Fifteen districts indicated that they made an effort to offer professional development opportunities and inservice for the FI teachers.

Twelve districts indicated that they made an effort to hire FI teachers that they felt would be committed to staying such as: people from B. C., people from similar types of regions, local people, couples, more mature people.

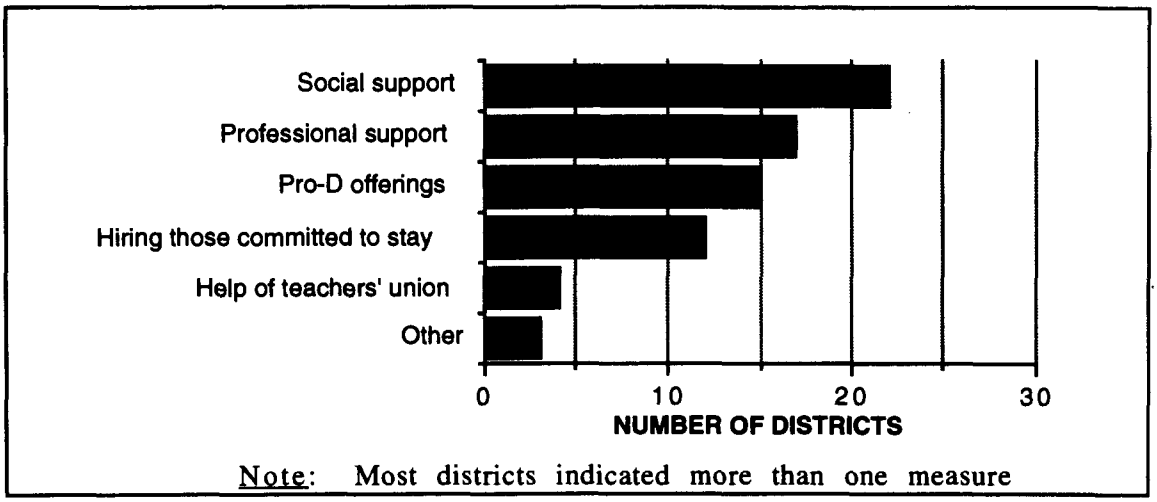
Four districts indicated that their local Provincial Specialists Association (APPIPC) and the local teachers' union help by making an effort to contact and support FI teachers.

One district indicated that it offers FI teachers immediate continuing contracts.

One district indicated that it offers FI teachers continuing contracts after one year of service.

One district indicated that for several years there was discussion about a possible support program for FI teachers, but that nothing has yet been confirmed.

Figure 11 Measures taken by B. C. school districts to retain FI teachers



Note: Most districts indicated more than one measure

Summary and Discussion of results

Recruiting of FI teachers in B. C. frequently involved out-of-district contacts of some sort. The use of newspaper ads, both in- and out-of-province, was by far the most commonly used method of recruitment in B.C. Over one-half of the districts advertised outside of B. C. and over one-third traveled out-of-district (most frequently to regions within the Western provinces) to interview.

Contact with faculties of education through job fairs, meetings, and student teachers was also a common method of recruitment in

B. C., with over one-third of the districts using it. It is of note that, while many districts used this method, the large majority (84%) of the districts indicated at the same time that there was an insufficient number of prepared immersion teachers graduating from B. C. faculties of education. This is further supported by the data obtained by the CEA (1992) which indicated that the majority of FI teachers in B. C. tended to have received their teacher preparation outside the province. This contrasts with results from a national study that found that the use of faculties of education for recruiting FI teachers was practised by over four-fifths of the districts surveyed (Obadia & Martin, 1993).

Other methods of recruitment used by districts ranged from the formal (hosting job fairs, use of government agencies, local postings, contact with local industry recruiters) to the informal (unsolicited applications, contacts through other teachers and coordinators, contacts with a nearby military base).

Hiring of FI and regular program teachers began generally in April. Most of the hiring of regular program teachers was finished by the end of June, while one-quarter of the districts were still hiring FI teachers in August. Less than one percent of FI teachers in the province were uncertified, and this situation appeared to be continually improving.

Over 40% of districts reported regularly or frequently having problems retaining FI teachers. The three major reasons for difficulties were related directly or indirectly to the fact that districts must recruit from outside the region. Cultural differences were perceived as the primary cause of difficulty, followed by problems due to teachers' desire to be located in other geographical areas. Perceived factors of age were the third cause of difficulty, given that younger teachers may tend to be more available and willing to move to a new area to find work. In a recent national study (Obadia & Martin, 1993), similar reasons were given concerning problems of retention of FI teachers, although only 25% of the districts indicated that they actually had problems in this area.

More than three quarters of B. C. districts indicated that they attempted to respond directly to the question of retaining FI teachers, and their methods of doing so correlated with the reasons they gave for their difficulty in retaining teachers. One-half of the districts offered some sort of social support in order to help alleviate cultural problems that FI teachers may experience. Approximately one-third of districts offered some sort of professional support or professional development in order to attract FI teachers and help relieve stressful working conditions. Over one-quarter of the districts attempted to respond to teacher retention difficulties concerning geographical setting and age by

hiring teachers they felt would be most suited to the area and who were more likely to make a long-term commitment.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Results and Discussion of the Study: General Comments Made by School Districts

This chapter contains the results and discussion of the additional comments that school district representatives were invited to give at the end of the interview. Two-thirds of the districts (30/45) made one or more comments, all of which have been grouped into three general categories: (a) what is going well in FI programs, (b) concerns about FI programs, (c) recommendations for the improvement of FI programs.

Results of the study

What Is Going Well in FI Programs

Five districts indicated positive trends concerning FI teacher availability. Various districts commented about: good luck in finding FI teachers, success with untrained FI teachers who were open to learning, teachers from Manitoba that were excellent, decreasing FI teacher turnover, an easing of the difficulty in recruiting of FI teachers.

Four districts indicated positive trends concerning the administration of FI programs. Various districts commented: that all monies allotted to FI programs in their district were spent on

the program; that innovative programming at the secondary level was being implemented in order to boost student numbers; that FI promotion campaigns were being initiated; that more emphasis would be placed on recruiting immersion-trained teachers.

Four districts indicated positive trends concerning the general quality of the program. Various districts commented: that FI was a good program; that the climate for FI programs was good and the problems were only systemic.

Two districts indicated positive trends concerning FI enrolment. One district felt that enrolment was stabilizing; the other predicted that enrolment would increase again within the next two years.

One district indicated that research projects such as this one had a positive effect on the administration of the program.

Concerns About FI Programs

Eleven districts indicated concern over the availability of qualified FI teachers. Various districts commented that: more immersion-trained teachers were needed (both regular classroom teachers and specialists); FI teachers were needed that were familiar with Year 2000 curriculum; there were problems with some francophone FI teachers that had unrealistic expectations of students; when hiring FI teachers, districts were often forced to

compromise on important qualities in order to ensure linguistic competence; there was concern about the linguistic competence of many FI teachers; the program could only be as good as the teachers; all FI teachers should have at least some preparation for immersion teaching.

Eight districts indicated concern over FI teacher recruitment. Various districts commented that: it was difficult to find personnel; the new union rule permitting teachers to give thirty-day notice before quitting caused many problems for recruitment in FI; it was difficult to find FI teachers trained in B. C.; private recruiting companies had had a field day because of a lack of leadership by the provincial Ministry of Education; personnel departments moved too slowly in hiring FI teachers; FI was becoming too popular, thus causing too big a demand for FI teachers; there was concern that FI teachers might not stay if Quebec separated.

Five districts indicated concern over the administration of FI programs. Various districts commented that: there was lack of adequate program supervision; there were not enough bilingual administrators; the French Coordinator position had been eliminated; support services were lacking in FI programs; there was not enough promotion of the program.

Four districts indicated concern over FI enrolment. Various districts commented that: there was concern about declining

enrolment; offerings in the FI program at the secondary level would be cut due to attrition.

Recommendations for the Improvement of FI Programs

Four districts made recommendations for improvement concerning pre- and inservice preparation of FI teachers. Various districts recommended: that there be more on-site and extension programs offered in cooperation with B. C. universities; that there be more retraining programs; that there be more preparation of specialists (learning assistance, library, music, etc.); that school districts take student teachers from Eastern universities.

One district each made the following recommendations: that the British Columbia College of Teachers provide leadership in setting and clarifying standards for certifying FI teachers; that the provincial Ministry of Education take a leadership role in the recruitment of FI teachers; that there be a more active promotion of FI programs, that there be a program created that would be in-between Core French and FI; that there be more district twinning with Quebec; that special help be available for secondary FI programs in small districts.

Summary and Discussion of the results

The majority of concerns expressed by school districts were related to the availability, professional qualifications and

certification of FI teachers. Even some of the comments indicating that things were going well (i.e. we have been lucky to find FI teachers; we have had good luck with untrained teachers; we find some out-of-province teachers excellent) reveal an underlying problem of availability of teachers qualified to teach in FI.

One-quarter of the districts expressed specific concerns related to professional qualifications of FI teachers, and several of the recommendations involved initiatives on the part of universities in order to help alleviate problems of FI teacher availability and preparation. This supports the data obtained in a national study by the CEA (1992) which indicated that the number one recommendation of school districts was to provide more inservice to FI teachers. The national survey conducted by Day et al. (1993) also reiterated the need for inservice, given that over two-fifths of the FI teachers surveyed did not receive specialized preparation for teaching in immersion either during or after their pre-service education.

Recommendations indicated that districts also seek leadership from outside agencies (B. C. College of Teachers and Ministry of Education) in order to promote the program and help alleviate problems of FI teacher certification and FI teacher recruitment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

French immersion in B. C. celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1993, amid presentations, accolades and retrospection on the history of the program. Gietz (1993), a former immersion coordinator for the B. C. Ministry of Education, writes,

> I know of no other public education program that has been so closely scrutinized. The [FI] program has resisted the vagaries of political change. It has outlasted organizations determined not to "have French shoved down their throats", groups convinced that official bilingualism is far too expensive, academics certain that the quality of education is inadequate and that English learning will suffer. It has survived the evolutionary process of determining what the program content should be, who should teach, and who should be enrolled under what circumstances, and for how long. ...it is a program that exists on its own merit (page 9).

In many ways, the results of this study indicate a program that has indeed "outlasted" and "survived" many of the problems that have faced it over the last quarter of a century, not the least of which has been the problem of teacher availability. This problem has yet to be solved, and FI remains at this point "a program that

exists on its own merit" rather than a program that exists because it has carved out a stable place for itself through significant reform affecting the availability of qualified teachers to teach in the program. Solutions of the first order--those that respond to a pressing need and are usually concrete in nature--have abounded. Meanwhile, most second order solutions--those that profoundly affect the long-term existence of the program through significant reform--have largely failed or gone unaddressed.

Berman (1981) identifies three stages of reform: mobilization, implementation and institutionalization. Huberman and Miles (1984) refer to this last stage as "routinization". The results of this study indicate that FI programs in B. C. have been successfully mobilized and implemented, but that institutionalization or routinization has yet to take place. Berman cautions that the literature treating the institutionalization of reforms shows that it is at this particular stage that most of them fail. The fundamental attributes of the implementation stage are clarification and adaptation, and herein lies the potential danger when reforms seek to become institutionalized. In the case of FI, the ongoing struggle to clearly define the qualified FI teacher, and the variety of haphazard or poorly analyzed adaptations that have been or are being implemented because of the lack of qualified FI teachers, puts the program at risk as a reform that will not become institutionalized.

The FI teacher, who theoretically retains a central and critically important position in regard to the long-term success of FI programs, appears to be more an elusive concept than a clearly articulated reality. This is especially true in B. C. where, through the results of this study, it is apparent that, compared to the national average, it is significantly more difficult to: (a) recruit FI teachers with specific training, (b) recruit FI teachers from within the province, and (c) retain FI teachers. Given these difficulties, it is not surprising that although nationally, two-fifths of school districts indicated shortages of qualified FI teachers in one or more teaching areas, a disconcerting two-thirds of B. C. school districts indicated the same shortages.

Conclusions Regarding the Recursive Nature of Measures Taken to Improve the Availability of FI Teachers in B. C.

Megarry (1980) states that there is "...no more important matter than that of securing a sufficient supply of the right kind of people to the profession, providing them with the best possible training and ensuring them a status and esteem commensurate with the importance and responsibility of their work (p. 16)". Few educators would argue against this priority in theory. It is important, however, not to confuse what is said with what is actually done, or what happens with what was intended to happen. As in the case of the lack of qualified FI teachers in B. C., we must

be cognizant that those initiating reform may be unclear whether they intend to change existing regularities or whether they are simply creating new ones (Sarason, 1982). Several of the measures taken by B. C. school districts to alleviate the problem of FI teacher availability have, rather than effected significant change, either made the situation worse in the long-term or have created new problematic situations that have come to be viewed as change for the better.

The Hiring of FI Teachers Who Have No Specific Preparation

Compared to the national average (approximately 40%), B. C. has a significantly higher percentage (approximately 66%) of FI teachers with no specific preparation to teach in an immersion program. When coupled with the fact that two thirds of B. C. districts still find it difficult to find qualified FI teachers, the picture is far from encouraging. It is hardly surprising that when faced with this dual problem, school districts are compelled to put priority on finding teachers *capable of teaching in FI* rather than teachers *specifically prepared for teaching in FI.*

Given the large percentage of FI teachers who have no specific preparation, there is a relatively small amount of professional development for FI teachers as indicated in this study and in a recent national study (Day, Shapson & Desquins, 1993). It seems that the distinction between being capable of teaching in FI

and being *specifically prepared* for teaching in FI has not been clearly articulated or generally accepted. Thus, after 25 years of adapting their professional requirements to meet the demands of a difficult situation, there are signs of a tacit acceptance on the part of some districts that because things have been the way they are for so long, that that is the way they should be or always will be.

The Recruiting of FI Teachers From Outside the Province

Almost four-fifths of FI teachers in B. C. come from outside the province. This state of affairs has no small effect on the ability of the provincial education system to exercise some control over the implementation and eventual routinization of FI programs. It would be unrealistic to expect that such a high percentage of teachers arriving from varied teacher preparation programs (which, in the vast majority of cases, do not include preparation for immersion) and from various cultural and educational settings, would be able to quickly and easily form a coordinated approach to the implementation and routinization of FI programs in B. C. Thus, the necessity of recruiting such a large number of FI teachers from out-of-province seems to be a significant factor in creating social, pedagogical, and professional problems for FI teachers.

The Attempt to Hire More FI Teachers Who Are From B. C.

Given the problems of teacher retention and program administration engendered in large part by the hiring of teachers from outside B. C., it is understandable that school districts would seek to hire more FI teachers who are local. Over two-fifths of the FI teachers in B. C. come from this province, and B. C. is second only after Quebec as being the place of origin of FI teachers in B. C.

Clearly, the hiring of B. C. teachers is a logical solution to some of the immediate problems of teacher retention and administration of FI programs. However, the fact that B. C. is a non-francophone province whose faculties of education do not prepare a sufficient number of FI teachers to meet the need, puts into question the wisdom of such a policy in the long term unless significant measures are taken to establish criteria for linguistic competence and to improve pre- and inservice programs in the province. Only 15% of school districts reported a clear majority of FI teachers with specific preparation, and several districts voiced concerns over the linguistic competence of some of their teachers. Thus, one of the measures taken to solve one aspect of a problem in the short term, actually may exacerbate the problem in the long term.

The Provision of Social and Professional Support in order to Retain FI Teachers

Over half of the school districts in B. C., recognizing that problems of differences in culture were often related to FI teacher turnover, have made attempts to offer social support to these teachers.

In comparison, only approximately one-third of the school districts offered professional support and approximately one-fifth offered professional development opportunities to help retain FI teachers. This indicates that the number of districts placing emphasis on professional support and development is not commensurate with the fact that over two-thirds of FI teachers in the province have no specific preparation to teach in immersion. This may be due to the fact that the lack of specific preparation is not always as visible or as easily identified and can more easily be put on hold than can manifestations of cultural differences. There still remain questions as to how these priorities come to be established and what the long-term effects will be of not at least matching the energy put into social support of FI teachers with significant professional support and development. Thus, measures taken to alleviate problems of a social nature have not necessarily created new problems, but they may tend to overshadow or disguise the need to address other major ones.

The Stabilization of FI Enrolment

The trend toward stabilization of FI enrolment rates in B. C. is not a result of direct action on the part of school districts, but the fact of it appears to have relieved, at least to some extent, the ongoing press to find qualified FI teachers. FI enrolment numbers increased by 32% in B. C. between 1987 and 1992, while the rate of enrolment decreased by 12%. The problem of FI teacher availability has tended to be viewed on the level of supply and demand, with the possible effect of lulling the system into equating stabilization of enrolment with stabilization of the FI teaching force. It is important to note that one-third of the districts still predicted an increase in FI enrolment over the next five years, and this included the one-fifth of the districts whose lead classes had yet to reach the secondary level. These predictions, given the present state of FI teacher availability in B. C., are by no means insignificant.

Recommendations

The question remains whether, after 25 years in existence, FI in B. C. continues to be viewed as an innovation, thus retaining the tag of temporary or non-permanent; or whether it can be regarded as a true educational reform which has instituted a change in the structural framework or regularities of the system. The results of this study do not pretend to predict the eventuality of FI taking its

place as a successful educational reform, but they do indicate that at this time, the program seems to be mired in measures taken primarily to ensure its survival within a structural framework that is obviously hard pressed to respond to its specific needs. That the availability of FI teachers has changed to some extent is evident in the results of this and other studies already mentioned, but to equate this change with significant improvement would be to ignore the reality of the long-term effects of many of the changes.

In order for FI programs to surmount problems that are systemic and which block paths to effective reform, a problem-solving structure needs to be conceptualized that is both oriented towards the present (first order) *and* the future (second order). The stability and durability of FI programs depend on serious attention given to questions such as:

(1) How can faculties of education, both provincially and nationally, be encouraged and supported not only to respond to the need to create FI teacher preparation programs (first order solution), but also to the need to collaborate among themselves and with school districts in order to research effective methodology and ensure some uniformity of approach and philosophy for these programs (second order solution)?

Far from being new as a question recommended for research, many educators over the last 20 years have called for the creation of viable teacher preparation programs that respond to the needs of FI programs (Wilton et al., 1984; Tardif, 1985; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1986; Lapkin et al., 1990; Martin et al., 1993; Day et al., 1993). In order to effectively create such programs, significant reform must be addressed concerning the need for more collaborative relationships between universities and school districts, between universities within the same province, between universities from the various provinces, and between faculties of education and other faculties.

(2) How can school districts be encouraged and supported not only to recruit teachers who can teach in FI programs (first order solution), but also to: (a) establish sound criteria for hiring of FI teachers, (b) actively promote continuous inservice of FI teachers; and (c) establish effective means by which districts will be able to retain FI teachers (second order solutions)?

Although the categorical imposition of criteria for the hiring of FI teachers is neither desirable nor realistic, school districts do seek support and leadership in this area and in the area of teacher development and retention. Finding effective means of bringing the practices of teacher recruitment, development and retention

closer to a model based on sound theory and research is imperative if FI programs in B. C. are to finally move from the stage of implementation to becoming institutionalized.

(3) How can FI teachers be encouraged and supported not only to find resources to deliver the program (first order solution), but to also promote the identification and reform of systemic regularities that hinder the creation of a program firmly based on sound pedagogy and educational theory (second order solution)?

The education system must continue to explore means of actively engaging teachers in the process of the reforms that affect their profession. Given the proven lack of qualified FI teachers in B. C., it may be more difficult for FI teachers to surmount the effects of a "deficit" approach to reform, which (a) identifies them as lacking in something crucial before they even begin and (b) which occupies an inordinate amount of their time and energy searching for materials and resources.

Concluding Remarks

FI teacher availability in B. C. has changed statistically in that school districts have an easier time filling FI positions and they have more success in retaining FI teachers. As well, the next few years promise a trend toward the stabilization of enrolment. A closer look at the situation reveals, however, that these changes are

mainly cosmetic. Although the statistics show an easing of the previous crisis in teacher availability, when viewed relative to the ideal, a crisis of important dimensions not only remains, but is actually being further provoked by some of the very measures that have been taken to ease the situation.

Viewed historically, the problems of teacher availability in present FI programs in B. C. bear a strong resemblance to those that have persisted over the last century in second language (SL) programs: (a) the necessity of recruiting teachers who have no formal preparation and/or whose competence in the target language is insufficient for teaching in SL programs, (b) a lack of specialized teacher preparation programs for SL teachers, (c) a lack of an articulated theoretical basis upon which to base SL teacher preparation programs.

It would be unfair and untrue to say that no advances have been made in the area of FI teacher availability, preparation, and recruitment. The very fact of the remarkable success of FI in B. C. and the rest of Canada attests to the power of this innovative program. But as the initial glow of success from the creation and implementation of the program begins to fade, its survival as an important reform will be seriously jeopardized unless the repetitive cycle of shortages of qualified teachers can be broken, and this through carefully thought out, consistent and collaborative action on the part of all stakeholders in the FI program.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questionnaire Concerning the Availability of Teaching Personnel for French Immersion

1. What French Immersion programs are offered in your school district?

2. In what year did your school district begin to offer an immersion program?

3. What is the approximate number of students that are registered in French Immersion in your district this year?
   Elementary?
   Secondary?

4. How many students do you estimate will be registered in French Immersion in your district next year?

5. What are your predictions for the next five years concerning numbers of students registered in French Immersion in your district?

   _____ Numbers will remain about the same
   _____ Numbers will increase.
   _____ Numbers will diminish.
   _____ I cannot predict.

   Please explain the reasons for your prediction: _____

6. Approximately how many full-time equivalent teachers teach or have taught in the French Immersion program in your district in the following years.

	Elementary	Secondary
1987-88?	____	_____
1988-89?	____	_____
1989-90?	____	_____
1990-91?	____	_____
1991-92?	____	_____

7. How would you describe the present situation in your school district concerning the availability of teachers qualified to teach in French Immersion? (Check all appropriate answers.)

_____ There is a sufficient number of qualified candidates to satisfy the demand.

_____ There is a lack of qualified candidates for :

[ ] primary level (Kindergarten through Grade 3).

[ ] intermediate level (Grade 4 through Grade 7).

[ ] secondary level (Grade 8 through Grade 12)

[ ] specialty areas (e.g. Learning Assistance, computers, Library, etc.)

[ ] substitute teaching

8. How does the above-mentioned situation regarding the present availability of qualified French Immersion teachers generally compare with the situation of the availability of qualified regular program teachers?

[ ] It's much more difficult to find qualified French Immersion teachers

[ ] It's a bit more difficult to find qualified French Immersion teachers.

[ ] It's about the same for both sectors.

[ ] It's a bit more difficult to find qualified regular program teachers.

[ ] It's much more difficult to find qualified regular program teachers.

9. In general, in preceding years, what was the situation concerning the availability of teachers qualified to teach in French Immersion? (Check all appropriate answers.)

_____ There was a sufficient number of qualified candidates to satisfy the demand.

_____ There was a lack of qualified candidates for the:

[ ] primary level (Kindergarten through Grade 3).

[ ] intermediate level (Grade 4 through Grade 7).

[ ] secondary level (Grade 8 through Grade 12)

[ ] specialty areas (e.g. Learning Assistance, computers, Library, etc.)

[ ] substitute teaching

10. How did the above-mentioned situation regarding the availability of qualified French Immersion teachers in preceding years generally compare with the situation of the availability of qualified regular program teachers?

[ ] It was much more difficult to find qualified French Immersion teachers

[ ] It was a bit more difficult to find qualified French Immersion teachers.

[ ] It was about the same for both sectors.

[ ] It was a bit more difficult to find qualified regular program teachers.

[ ] It was much more difficult to find qualified regular program teachers.

11. What are your predictions for the next five years concerning the number of French Immersion teachers that will be needed in your district?

_____ Number will remain about the same

_____ Number will increase.

_____ Number will diminish.

_____ I cannot predict.

Please explain the reasons for your prediction: _____

12. What measures does your school district presently take to attract qualified French Immersion teachers to your district? (Check all appropriate answers)

_____ Newspaper ads

_____ Contact with Faculties of Education through ads, job fairs, meetings

_____ District promotion of teacher education programs by encouraging French Immersion teachers to accept student teachers into their classes

_____ Travel by district representatives to areas outside the region to interview prospective French Immersion teachers (Please indicate destinations.)

_____ Other (Please specify) _____

13. Using numbers 1 through 4 (with number 1 indicating the highest percentage) please indicate where most of the French Immersion teachers in your district come from.

[ ] Quebec

[ ] Other Canadian province or territory

Please indicate which one _____

[ ] France

[ ] Other European countries

[ ] Other (please specify) _____

14. Approximately what percentage of the French Immersion teachers in your district are native French speakers?

15. What is your perception of the present number of immersion-trained teachers graduating from your provincial faculties of education?

    [ ] There are more than enough for our needs.
    [ ] There are sufficient numbers for our needs.
    [ ] There are insufficient numbers to meet our needs.

16. Among the French Immersion teachers presently employed in your district, what percentage approximately have specific specialized training for immersion teaching?

17. In general, by what month is your district able to complete the hiring of <u>French Immersion teachers</u> for the following school year?

    [ ] April
    [ ] May
    [ ] June
    [ ] July
    [ ] August
    [ ] Other (please specify)_____

18. In general, by what month is your district able to complete the hiring of regular program teachers for the following school year?

[ ] April
[ ] May
[ ] June
[ ] July
[ ] August
[ ] Other (please specify)_____

19. If you presently employ any French Immersion teachers that cannot yet be certified in your province (i.e. they are working with special permission from the Ministry of Education), please indicate how many.

20. In preceding years, how did the number of uncertified French Immersion teachers employed by your district compare with the present number?

[ ] There used to be many more uncertified French Immersion teachers than now.

[ ] There used to be a few more uncertified French Immersion teachers than now.

[ ] There used to be approximately the same number.

[ ] There used to be a few less uncertified French Immersion teachers than now.

[ ] There used to be far fewer uncertified French Immersion teachers than now.

[ ] There have never been uncertified French Immersion teachers in this district.

21. Does your school district have difficulty in retaining French Immersion teachers?

_____ Not at all

_____ Rarely

_____ Fairly regularly

_____ Often

_____ Very often

If your district experiences difficulty in retaining French Immersion teachers, please comment on the reasons. _____

23. If your district takes any specific measures to help retain French Immersion teachers, please indicate what they are.

23. Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

_____